Deutsch sein heisst objektiv sein.

Herrn Dr. Skalweit
mit besten Wünschen
Kuno Francke

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

Glimpses of Modern German Culture. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1898.

A HISTORY

OF

GERMAN LITERATURE

AS DETERMINED BY SOCIAL FORCES

BY

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Meinen lieben Geschwistern in
Deutschland, der Schweiz
und Mexico
widme ich diese Blätter als einen
schwachen Ausdruck unverbrüchlicher
Treue und Anhänglichkeit an unser
gemeinsames Vaterland.

Die Litteraturen, scheint es mir, haben Jahreszeiten, die, miteinander abwechselnd, wie in der Natur, gewisse Phänomene hervorbringen und sich der Reihe nach wiederholen.

GOETHE, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* III, 12.

Die Gedanken kommen wieder, die Ueberzeugungen pflanzen sich fort, die Zustände gehen unwiederbringlich vorüber.

GOETHE, *Maximen und Reflexionen* III.

— und so oft im erneuenden Umschwung
In verjüngter Gestalt aufstrebte die Welt,
Klang auch ein germanisches Lied nach.

PLATEN, *Der Romantische Oedipus* V.

PREFACE.

THE following attempt to define what seem to me the essential features of German literature is made from the point of view of the student of civilization rather than from that of the linguistic scholar or the literary critic.

My own university studies under such men as Giesebrecht, Brunn, Erwin Rohde, Paulsen; my subsequent work under Georg Waitz; and the part taken by me in editing for the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica* the controversial writings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—all this has naturally led me to look at the substance rather than the form of literature, to see in literature primarily the working of popular forces, to consider it chiefly as an expression of national culture.

To this personal bias there was added the consideration that, while there is no lack of works dealing with the history of German literature from the linguistic or the literary point of view, there seems to be a decided need of a book which, based upon an original study of the sources, should give a coherent account of the great intellectual movements of German life as expressed in literature; which should point out the mutual relation of action and reaction between these movements and the social and political condition of the masses from which they sprang or which they affected;

which, in short, should trace the history of the German people in the works of its thinkers and poets.

No one could feel more clearly than I how far the present essay falls short of achieving what is implied in the foregoing remarks. All that I wish to claim is that this is an honest attempt, to analyze the social, religious, and moral forces which determined the growth of German literature as a whole. And all that I can hope is that the very distance which separates me from the country of my birth may have helped me to see at least some of its intellectual mountain-peaks as they tower up in clear outline above the dark stretch of the hills and the lowlands.

As to the fundamental principles which have shaped my conception of German literature, I may here say this. It seems to me that all literary development is determined by the incessant conflict of two elemental human tendencies: the tendency toward personal freedom and the tendency toward collective organization. The former leads to the observation and representation of whatever is striking, genuine, individual; in short, to realism. The latter leads to the observation and representation of whatever is beautiful, significant, universal; in short, to idealism. The individualistic tendency, if unchecked, may lead either to a vulgar naturalism or to a fantastic mysticism. The collectivistic tendency, if unchecked, may lead to an empty conventionalism. Those ages and those men in whom the individualistic and the collectivistic tendencies are evenly balanced, produce the works of literature which are truly great.

Should this book reach the shores of Germany, let it greet from me all the dear old places and faces; especially three friends and associates of youthful days, the thought of whom was constantly with me while writing it: Friedrich Reuter, professor at the Altona 'Christianeum'; Friedrich Paulsen, professor at the University of Berlin; Ferdinand Tönnies, professor at the University of Kiel. I should be

happy if they were to find here a not altogether unworthy expression of the ideals which were the bond of our friendship in years gone by.

To my American friends and colleagues, Ephraim Emerton and G. L. Kittredge, I am indebted for a careful revision of the language of the book. But in spite of this kind service, for which I wish here to express my sincerest gratitude, its style will easily betray the foreigner.

KUNO FRANCKE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.,
December 1, 1895.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In sending the second edition of this book to press, I cannot withhold the wish that it might have been possible for me to make a more extensive use of the suggestions offered in so friendly a spirit by not a few of my reviewers. But inasmuch as some at least of these changes would involve the rewriting of considerable portions of the book, I shall have to leave this task to some future opportunity. A few slight changes, however, have been made and typographical errors have been corrected.

K. F.

January 3, 1897.

In the third edition, also, only a few minor corrections have been made.

K. F.

March 23, 1899.

NOTE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

At the suggestion of my publishers, the fourth American edition of "Social Forces in German Literature" appears under a different title. I have assented to this change partly in order to secure uniformity of title with the first English edition which is to be brought out simultaneously by Messrs. George Bell & Sons, partly because the present title indicates more clearly than the former the fact that this book attempts to give a comprehensive account of the development of German literature as a whole.

In substance the only change made in this edition is a somewhat fuller treatment of the contemporary German drama. Part of the new matter is reprinted—with the kind consent of Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co.—from my "Glimpses of Modern German Culture."

K. F.

February, 27, 1901.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AGE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE HEIGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

(The Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AGE OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE CLIMAX OF INDIVIDUALISM.

(The End of the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE ERA OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND THE GROWTH OF THE COLLECTIVISTIC IDEAL.

(From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Revolution of 1848.)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

GdgPh. = Grundriss der germanischen Philologie, herausgegeben von H. Paul. Strassburg, 1891–93.

GG. = K. Goedeke, Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung. Zweite Aufl., Hannover (Dresden), 1884–91.

MSD. = Müllenhoff und Scherer, Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa aus dem 8.–12. Jahrhundert. Dritte Aufl., Berlin, 1892.

DNL. = Deutsche National-Litteratur, herausgegeben von Joseph Kürschner. Berlin und Stuttgart.

NddLw. = Neudrucke deutscher Litteraturwerke des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, herausgegeben von W. Braune. Halle, 1882 ff.

DLD. = Deutsche Litteraturdenkmale des 18. (und 19.) Jahrhunderts, herausgegeben von B. Seuffert (und A. Sauer). Heilbronn (Stuttgart), 1882 ff.

INTRODUCTION.

THE EPOCHS OF GERMAN CULTURE.

The fundamental conception which underlies the following account of the development of German literature is that of a continual struggle between individualistic and collectivistic tendencies, between man and society, between personality and tradition, between liberty and unity, between cosmopolitanism and nationality,—a struggle which may be said to be the prime motive power of all human progress.

The first appearance of Germanic tribes in the foreground of European history, the influx of the Northern barbarians into the decaying civilization of the Roman empire, is marked by a dissolution of all social bonds. Severed from their native soil, thrust into a world in which their ancestral faith, customs, institutions have no authority, the Teutons of the era of the Migrations experience for the first time on a grand scale the conflict between universal law and individual passion. The Germanic epic with its colossal types of heroic devotion, greed, and guilt, is the poetic embodiment of this tragic conflict.

Out of the bloody tumult of the Migration epoch there rise gradually, from the ninth century on, the outlines of a new social order. The Carolingian monarchy, a gigantic attempt to unite the whole continent under Germanic rule, soon gives way to more limited and more natural political combinations; and by the middle of the tenth century we see for the first time a distinctly German state holding its place among, or rather above, a variety of

other nationalities. At the same time, the papacy, as the representative both of the Christian ideal of cosmopolitanism and of the Roman claim to world-dominion, extends its centralizing influence over the whole Occident, thus creating a new international bond of spiritual relationship. In the fierce and prolonged struggles which, with alternating success, are waged between empire and papacy, the intellectual life of feudal society reaches its first climax. Under the influence of all these contrasting tendencies there grows up a literature which, though controlled exclusively by ecclesiastics, oscillates for a long time between a drastic representation of every-day reality, and ideal images of the inner life; until about the middle of the twelfth century, simultaneously with the heightening of the whole national existence brought about by the crusades, attempts are made to depict human nature in its fulness.

The end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth show mediæval society at its height. The struggle between empire and papacy now assumes its grandest proportions and brings forth the most striking manifestations of collective consciousness. The aristocratic principles of chivalry have been fully established, and are accepted as the foundation of public life. Allegiance to the feudal lord, to the church, to the chosen lady; a decorous behaviour, courtliness of speech and bearing, valour, readiness for service, self-possession, gentleness, magnanimity, moderation; the whole galaxy of virtues suggested by the one word *diu mâze* (measure):—these are the duties magnified by an age whose social etiquette seems to bring back in a new form the Greek ideal of καλοκἀγαθία. In the Minnesong; in the rejuvenated and transformed Germanic epic of the Migration period; in the adaptation, through the medium of the French, of Celtic and Græco-Roman epic traditions; the chivalric ideal receives its supreme poetic expression. At the same time, however, there is seen in the finest representatives of chivalric culture—in Walther von der Vogel-

weide, Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strassburg—an instinctive reaching out beyond the limits of this culture, a divinatory anticipation of a new social order.

The beginnings of this new order make themselves felt about the middle of the thirteenth century. While the empire falls a prey to sectional rivalries, while the church shows signs of internal decay, while chivalry deteriorates both economically and morally, modern freedom finds its first embodiment in the communal independence of the great commercial centres. Corporate interest, to be sure, remains even here the chief concern of life; but by its side, or rather within it, there develops a spirit of self-assertion, of observation, of introspection, which ultimately must turn against the corporate consciousness and destroy it. In the directness and subjectivity of the Volkslied; in the sturdy realism of the religious drama; in the glorification by the Mystics of the inner union between God and the individual soul; in the proclamation by the Humanists of the sovereignty of the individual intellect—we see different phases of that revolt against mediæval society which culminates in the religious Reformation.

The reformation begins with a grand movement for popular freedom; it ends by establishing more firmly than ever the absolutism, religious as well as political, of the territorial princes. It begins with the restoration of national unity and greatness in sight; it ends in the misery of the Thirty Years' War. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the fate of Germany seems to be sealed. Instead of the generous, broad, all-embracing mediæval church there dominates in religious affairs a narrow, spiteful, inquisitorial sectarianism. Instead of the cultivated and public-spirited aristocracy of the Hohenstaufen period, there rules in political matters an ignorant, swaggering, depraved cavalierdom. The proud, stately, self-asserting burgher of the palmy days of the Hanse has been transformed into a

timid, cowed, official-ridden subject. Literature is degraded into a plaything for idle courtiers. The German past is effaced. Society is atomized; public life is dead.

At this point there sets in a movement, the roots of which go back to Humanism and the Reformation, the climax of which is attained in the age of Kant and Goethe, —the struggle for completeness of individuality. Debarred from active participation in public life, hemmed in by narrow surroundings, out of contact with the nation at large, Germany's best men now turn all the more eagerly to the cultivation of the inner self. Reorganization of the national body through regeneration of the individual mind—this now becomes the great task of literature. Pietism and Rationalism, Sentimentalism and Storm-and-Stress, Classicism and Romanticism, co-operate in this common task of building up and rounding out the inner life. And at the end of the eighteenth century, at the very time when the last remnants of the old German empire are swept away by the irresistible tide of the French Revolution, German culture has reached a height which is best described in the words of Goethe: "Germany as a whole is nothing, the individual German is everything."

And here, finally, begins the last great movement of German thought. Just as Wolfram von Eschenbach and his peers point beyond the conventions of chivalric society toward individual freedom and culture, so Goethe, Schiller, and their kin point beyond individual freedom and culture toward the common tasks of a new society. German literature of the nineteenth century, while by no means discarding the individualism of the eighteenth, finds its highest inspiration in this new, collectivistic ideal.

This is, in outline, the intellectual development which we shall now proceed to consider in detail, briefly up to the time of the Thirty Years' War, somewhat more fully from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERIOD OF THE MIGRATIONS.

(From the Fifth to the Ninth Century.)

The movements of the various tribes.

The period of the Migrations, introducing for the first time Germanic tribes as shapers of the destiny of Europe, forms the opening chapter in the political career of the German people. From their seats north and east of the Danube and the Rhine, where we find the Germans settled at the time of Augustus, they move, tribe after tribe, southward and westward and gradually overrun the greater part of the Roman empire. First, to mention only a few striking dates, the Visigoths under their heroic leader Alaric (d. 410) sweep over the Balkan peninsula, down into Greece, and through all Italy, until they finally settle in Spain. They are succeeded by the Vandals, who with equally irresistible rapidity pass through middle and southwestern Europe, cross over to Africa (429), and from there, by frequent piratical expeditions, terrorize the coasts of the Mediterranean. About the same time the Burgundians leave their seats between the Oder and the Vistula and settle in the upper Rhine valley; until, defeated in a violent conflict with Hunnish tribes (437), they abandon this new home also and move on towards the banks of the Rhone. Soon after (449), the Anglo-Saxons, hired by the Britons to assist them in their struggle against the Picts and Scots, swarm over the Channel and, having conquered the common foe, defeat and subdue their former allies. There follows the gigantic clash between the Roman world and the Hunnish invaders under Attila; and here again Ger-

manic tribes play an important part. Attila himself appears half Germanized, his name is Gothic,[1] at his court he receives Gothic singers, Ostrogoths and Thuringians form a part of his hosts; but against him also, on the side of the Romans, there are German armies, and the great battle of Châlons (451) is won mainly through the valour of the Visigoths. Shortly afterwards the domination of Italy passes definitely into German hands. In 476 Odoacer, a chieftain of the tribe of the Heruli, dethrones the powerless Roman emperor and assumes himself the title of *patricius* and king of Italy. This rule soon gives way to that of the noble tribe of the Ostrogoths, who under their great leader Theoderic and his successors not only extend their sway over the greater part of the peninsula, but also attempt to bring about a reconciliation between Germanic and Roman culture and institutions; until they, in turn, succumb to the armies of the Byzantine emperor (552). Now the Langobards rush into the place left free by the Ostrogoths, and for two centuries (568–774) subject the people of northern Italy to an iron military rule, without, however, leaving more than a sporadic impress on the character of the vanquished country. Finally, the Franks, by overthrowing the Roman rule in Gaul and by gradually forcing the other German tribes into their allegiance, become the dominating power in Europe, and, under Charles the Great, even restore the name and supremacy of the old Roman empire. With the foundation of the Carolingian monarchy the westward wanderings of the Germanic nations may be said to have come to an end; except for the Norsemen, whose Viking expeditions continued to infest the coast districts of northern and western Europe throughout the ninth century, terminating only with the establishment of that Norman

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[1] It is a diminutive form of Goth. atta = father. Cf. J. Grimm, *Gesch. der d. Spr.*[3] *p.* 189. 332. F. Kluge, *Nominale Stammbildungslehre* § 56.

colony on French soil (912) which was destined to be the foster-mother of English greatness.

The full extent of the extraordinary revolution which these centuries of uninterrupted warfare and tumult produced in the life and character of the German race it is hard for us to appreciate at this distant day. But if we were to express in a word the main lines on which this revolution seems to have proceeded, we might say that the Teutons during the period of the Migrations conquered the world at the expense of themselves. In the time of Tacitus they were the most purely aboriginal and unadulterated nation of Europe; in the time of Charles the Great they are largely Romanized. Before they had crossed the Danube, they prayed to Wôdan and Donar and Frija; having overthrown the Roman empire, they bow before the Crucified One. Once, in their native woods, they were free men; now, on foreign soil, they obey kings. It would, of course, be a mistake to see in this self-surrender of Germanic tradition and faith a loss only. Without the influx of Roman elements, without Christianity, without the feudal monarchy, the history of the Middle Ages would have been without its greatest glory and its greatest achievements. And even the very process of mastering the new form of life, the struggle between native and foreign conceptions and institutions, seems to have brought out in the character of the German invaders traits which otherwise might have remained hidden.

Effect of the Migrations on the national character.

There can be little doubt that it was this very conflict which gave rise to those manifestations of a haughty race-feeling which are so characteristic of the heroes of the Migration period. As early as the beginning of the third century an adventurous Gothic herdboy—the later emperor Maximinus—found his way into the camp of a Roman army and the presence of the Roman emperor. Far from being overawed by the august surroundings, he at once enters upon a wrestling-match with one of the im-

Race feeling.

perial body-guards, and tries to outrun the horse of the emperor himself.[2] When Alaric, before the walls of Rome, is met by a deputation of citizens, who, in order to frighten him from an attack on the city, point out to him the strength of the Roman army, he answers:[3] "Well, the thicker the grass the easier it is to mow." When the Vandal king Geiseric sets out on one of his piratic expeditions, and the pilot asks him whither he shall direct his course, the king replies:[4] "Wherever there are people with whom God is angry." Such stories, be they historically correct or not, show at least the spirit attributed to the leaders of the invaders by their own contemporaries; and something of the same spirit, of the same contempt for their enemies, of the same fatalistic belief in their own power and race-superiority, must have lived in the masses of the invaders also. Surely, nothing could be prouder and more defiant than the seif-characterization of the Franks in the prologue of their national code, the *Lex Salica*:[5] "The glorious people of the Franks, whose founder is God himself, brave in arms, firm in peace, wise in council, noble in body, radiant in health, excelling in beauty, daring, quick, hardened, . . . this is the people which shook the cruel yoke of the Romans from its neck."

Contact with higher civilization.

Alongside of this proud self-consciousness of a people brimming over with animal vigour and youthful defiance we find an equally wonderful power of adaptation in these German barbarians, and this faculty also is stimulated by the contact with the higher civilization of Rome and the deeper thought of the Christian church. The history of the world knows few more impressive figures than Theoderic, the noble Ostrogoth, who, after having es-

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[2] Jordanes *Getica* ed. Th. Mommsen XV, 84 ff.
[3] Zosimus *Ἱστορία νέα* ed. Imm. Bekker V, 40.
[4] Procopius *De bello Vandalico* ed. W. Dindorf I, 5.
[5] *Lex Salica* ed. Merckel *prol.* IV., *p.* 93.

tablished the dominion of his people in Italy with bloody hand, attempts to rule as a prince of peace over Teutons and Romans alike, protecting the weak, advancing the public prosperity, establishing a new code of law, surrounding himself with Roman statesmen, philosophers and artists, and at the same time preserving the proud, warlike traditions of his own people. No more venerable leader is seen at the beginning of any nation's history than Ulfilas, the bishop of the Visigoths (d. 381), who, a second Moses, guiding his people through war and strife, at the same time became, through his translation of the Bible, the creator of their written language. No purer and better men have ever lived than the Anglo-Saxon missionaries, such as Willibrord (d. c. 740) and Winifred (d. 755), who, only a few generations after their own nation had been won over to Christianity, set out to preach the gospel to their German brethren on the Rhine and the Weser: men sturdy in mind and body, single-minded, open-eyed, full of common sense, yet unflinchingly clinging to the spiritual, ready to lay down their lives at any moment in the service of the eternal.

Charles the Great.

And what hero of the world's history could be compared to the man whose towering figure stands at the end of this whole epoch: Charles the Great? His attempt to weld the Germanic tribes into one mighty nation may have been premature; his methods of spreading the Christian religion may have been crude and barbaric; his efforts, both for the renewal of classic literature and art and for the preservation of ancient Germanic poetry, may have been temporary failures; yet it is not too much to say that his life-work was an anticipation of the course which German culture was to take during the next eight hundred years. His empire soon crumbled to pieces, but the idea of German unity and the memory of Germanic traditions remained alive, in spite of all that tended to obliterate them. The splendour of imperial

Aachen soon vanished, but the seeds from which was to spring the flower of mediæval art had not been sown in vain. The fame of the imperial academy was soon forgotten, but the foundations had been laid for a system of public instruction which was to maintain throughout the Middle Ages the contact at least of the clergy with classic antiquity; and scholars like Paulus Diaconus, Einhard, and Alcuin, the emperor's most trusted advisers, must be counted among the forerunners of sixteenth-century Humanism.

Disintegration of public morality.

One may be fully sensible of these hopeful and positive features of the time, and yet find the chief characteristic of the period of the Migrations in a complete uprooting of public morality, a universal overturning of inherited conceptions of right and wrong. Even if we consider the description of Germanic society by Tacitus, written about three hundred years before the Migrations began, as too idealistic and as, in some respects, overdrawn, there can be no doubt that the life of the Germans at that time was in a singular degree surrounded and guarded by a pure tradition, that the sanctity of blood-relationship, the holiness of the plighted word, the chastity of women, were with them ideals not yet to be defiled without popular chastisement. And nothing could more vividly express the very essence of Germanic life at that time than the famous word of the Roman historian,[6] that with the Germans good customs were more powerful than elsewhere good laws. Now this whole fabric of popular custom is broken up. In the decades, nay, centuries of perpetual fighting and wandering that follow, tribal traditions are effaced, the contact with the native soil is lost, family ties are severed, religious beliefs are shattered. And now there appear, as the typical

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[6] Tacitus *Germania* ed. Müllenhoff, *c.* 19.—A masterly characterization of primitive Germanic culture in K. Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte* I, 160 ff. Cf. W. Arnold, *Deutsche Urzeit p.* 187 ff. F. Dahn, *Gesch. d. deutschen Urzeit* I, 122 ff. For the oldest religious poetry cf. R. Koegel, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. bis z. Ausg. d. MA.* I, 12 ff.

hero and heroine of the period, the man without conscience, the woman without shame, believing in nothing but themselves, restrained by nothing but the limits of their own power, individuals cut loose from the laws of common humanity.

Especially the annals of the Langobards and the Franks are stained with the record of crimes, perhaps the most atrocious and colossal in human history. The Langobard king Alboin had killed in battle the king of a rival tribe, Kunimund. Out of the murdered man's skull he ordered a drinking-cup to be made, his daughter Rosamond he carried away captive and made her his wife. Once, at a drinking-bout in his banquet-hall, he has the cup filled with wine, and offers it to the queen. Compelled to drink, she obeys, but she feels deeply the insult to her father's memory, and resolves on revenge. She hires a murderer, leads him herself into the room where Alboin is taking his noonday rest, binds the sword of the sleeping man to the bedstead, takes away his shield, and then watches him as he falls under the blows of the assassin. She marries an accomplice to the murder, Helmichis; and both, taking with them Alboin's treasure, flee the country. But soon Rosamond's wanton desire is directed toward another lover. She gives poison to Helmichis; but he, after putting the cup to his lips, feels what he has taken, and forces Rosamond to drink the rest of the deadly potion.[7]

Alboin and Rosamond.

The whole record of Clovis, the king of the Franks, who through his alliance with the papal see laid the foundation of the feudal theocracy of the Middle Ages, is one of broken faith and brutal perfidy. It may suffice to relate one episode in his career, in the words of the bishop Gregory of Tours, the foremost contemporary chronicler of the deeds of the Merovingian kings (d. 594)[8]:

Clovis.

[7] Paulus Diaconus *Historia Langobardorum* ed. G. Waitz II, 28 f.
[8] Gregorius Turonensis *Historia Francorum* ed. W. Arndt II, 40.

"After Clovis had made Paris his capital, he sent secret messengers to Cloderic, son of Sigibert, king of the Ripuarian Franks, who resided at Cologne, with these words: 'Your father is old and feeble and lame. If he were dead, his kingdom and our friendship would be yours.' This message aroused the young man's cupidity, and set him to thinking how he could do away with his father. One day the latter was hunting in the forests on the banks of the Rhine opposite Cologne; when at noon he was lying asleep in his tent, assassins, hired by his son, fell upon him and killed him. Thereupon the son sent messengers to king Clovis, who said in Cloderic's name: 'My father is dead, and his kingdom and treasures are now mine. Send some of your people to me, and I will gladly give you whatever of my father's treasure pleases you.' Clovis answered: 'I thank you for your good will. When my envoys come, do not hesitate, I pray you, to show them all; for I shall not take anything of your riches.' The messengers came, and Cloderic showed them the treasure of his father. Leading them to one of the chests, he said: 'In this chest my father used to keep his coins.' 'Will you not,' answered the messengers, 'reach with your hand into it down to the bottom that we may see all that is in it?' He did so, and as he stooped, one of the men split his skull with an axe. Clovis, at the news of Cloderic's death, hastened to Cologne, called the people together, and spoke as follows: 'Listen to what has happened! While I was far from here, sailing down the Scheldt river, Cloderic, the son of my own cousin Sigibert, coveting his father's realm, made him believe that I was seeking his life. And when the old man, alarmed by this suspicion, fled, he sent assassins after him who succeeded in killing him. Thereafter Cloderic himself, while displaying his father's treasures, was likewise murdered by a man unknown to me. In all these things I have had no part; for I am not so wicked as to kill my own kin. But since it has thus come to pass, I give you this advice: turn to me, that you may live securely under my protection.' The people, when they heard this, applauded Clovis, lifted him on the shield, and greeted him as king."

Fredegond and Brunhild.

It is hardly necessary to give further proofs of the utter disintegration of moral feeling brought about by the political and social revolution of the Migration period; but it may be added that the part played by women in this shocking history of crime and perfidy seems to have been even more striking than that of men. There is a touch of genuine humanity in Rosa-

mond's atrocities; for they proceeded in the first place from filial attachment and wounded pride. But one looks in vain for any redeeming weakness or virtue in such characters as the Frankish princess Austrichildis, who, dying, entreated her husband to have the attendant physicians beheaded after her death,[9] or the rival queens, Fredegond and Brunhild, who involved a whole generation of Frankish princes in their own vice and villany. There is no parallel in history to the fearful death which Brunhild, by that time a white-haired matron of about seventy years, found in 613 at the hands of the enraged Frankish nobles. Convicted of the murder of ten members of the Merovingian dynasty, she was tortured for three days, led through the camp on the back of a camel, tied to the feet of wild horses and dragged to death. Her corpse was thrown into the fire.[10]

Conclusion.

To sum up. It is a time of rapid national expansion, of radical changes in habit, in conduct, in belief; a time full of gigantic passions, full of unscrupulous achievement. The heart of the people is stirred by the sight of great individuals and mighty deeds, representing those tremendous forces which are shaping the destiny of the people itself, showing in striking proportions the power of this youthful race both for good and for evil.

The Germanic epic a reflex of the Migrations.

Out of such travail great epics are born. Such a time it was when the Hindu people migrated from their peaceful settlements on the banks of the Indus southward, to conquer the nations of the Ganges valley; and the poetical reflection of this era of warfare and conquest was the great national epic *Mahabbharata*. Such a time it was when the Greeks fought their way into western Asia; and the poetical reflection of this combat was the Homeric poetry. Now the same thing happens again; at the entrance of modern

[9] Gregorius Turonensis *l. c.* V, 35.

[10] *Liber historiae Francorum* ed. B. Krusch c. 40.

European history, and as a poetical reflection of the time of the Migrations, stand the great epic poems of the Germanic peoples :—creations alive with all the stir and strife of the time ; retaining an afterglow of the oldest mythical tradition, but strangely tinged with recent historical experiences ; representing the old Germanic idea of uprightness, devotion and fidelity, but also the loosening of all social bonds, and the rule of vile passions brought about through this age of revolt ; a grand triumphal song of world-wide victories, but also a fearful record of the reach of guilt and the tragedy of greatness.

Mode of recital.

Our direct knowledge of these poems is very scanty. We know that they were sung or recited in the banquet-halls of Germanic kings, mostly by men of noble blood, who themselves might have taken part in the heroic scenes which they described. The Byzantine statesman Priscus, in the narrative of his stay at the court of Attila, tells of the appearance of Gothic singers at the royal table. "Towards evening," he says,[11] "they lit torches, and two barbarians, stepping in front of Attila, recited songs celebrating his victories and warlike virtues. The guests looked intently at the singers, some enjoying the poems, some inspired by the thought of their own frays ; others, however, whose bodies had become feeble, and whose impetuosity had been calmed by age, bursting into tears." Jordanes, the historian of the Ostrogoths, relates of the nobles of his own race, that, accompanied by stringed instruments, they sang the heroic deeds of their ancestors.[12] In the Anglo-Saxon poem *Béowulf* a thane of the king is introduced,[13]—

a man renowned, mindful of songs,
he who very many of old-time sagas,
a great number remembered,

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[11] Cf. *Historici Graeci minores* ed. L. Dindorf I, 317.
[12] Jordanes *Getica* V, 43.
[13] v. 867 ff.; Garnett's translation.

riding on horseback with other warriors and singing to them of dragon-fights and the winning of ring-hoards.

We know, also, or may at least infer, that the form of all of these poems once in existence was the same as that of the few preserved to us: namely, the rhymeless, alliterative verse, consisting of two half-lines, separated by a cæsura, a metre whose grand, sonorous monotony was wonderfully adapted to the representation of a life of primitive heroism.

Form.

But as to the subject-matter of these poems, the extent of the sagas treated in them, and the manner in which they were treated, our knowledge is for the most part based not upon these songs themselves but upon indirect evidence drawn from works of a much later period. It is well known that the Christian church, considering the native Germanic traditions as heathenish monstrosities, tried to suppress them in every possible way. This attempt was so successful that, although even a man like Charles the Great asserted his influence for the preservation and collection of ancient popular lays,[14] they had by the end of the tenth century, with a few exceptions, disappeared. And the only genuine remnants of the poetry of the Migration period left to us are the Anglo-Saxon poem of Béowulf, just mentioned (end of the seventh century), a fragment of the old Low-German song of Hildebrand (c. 800), and the heroic lays of the Icelandic *Edda* (ninth and tenth centuries). Fortunately, however, the memory of the deeds related in the ancient songs did not die out with the songs themselves. And when in the twelfth century, ushered in by the enthusiasm of the crusades and the glorious reign of the Hohenstaufen, a new epoch of literary greatness dawned upon Germany, the old heroes of the Migration period again took hold of the popular fancy

Remnants of epic poetry.

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[14] Einhard *Vita Karoli Magni* ed. G. Waitz *c.* 29.

and again were celebrated in epic song. Of course they did not appear in the same guise as of old: they were thoroughly Christianized, from fierce stormy barbarians they had turned into gallant chivalrous knights; and yet it is possible to detect the old spirit even in this new form, to recognise in these creations of the Minnesinger period the contemporaries of Attila and Theoderic.

It is, then, from these later epics, in connection with the few older lays just mentioned, that we shall try to gather at least a few hints of what the heroic poetry of the Germanic peoples of the time of the Migrations seems to have been. A feature common to all, or nearly all, of these lays, which perhaps more clearly than any other brings before our mind the disintegrating, transforming, and readjusting process forced upon the Germanic tribes during their wanderings, is, on the one hand, a strange blending of half-forgotten mythical legends with historical facts, on the other, an utter confusion of the historical tradition itself.

Combination of mythical and historical elements.

Thus Theoderic the Ostrogoth, or, as the epic poets, in memory of his victory over Odoacer near Verona (489), call him, Dietrich von Bern, is taken to be a contemporary, not only of Attila, who in reality lived in the time of his father, but also of king Ermanric, who lived more than a century before him; and this Ermanric is called king of Rome, instead of what he really was, king of the Goths. The historical fact then of the conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths is reproduced in this legendary form: Theoderic is driven from his Italian home through the evil devices of his uncle Ermanric; with a few faithful followers he finds refuge at the court of Attila, where for long years he lives as an exile; finally he gathers an army round him, returns to Italy, defeats Ermanric, and wins back his inherited kingdom.

In the same way the Béowulf saga retains the memory of an actual Danish chieftain, living in the beginning of the

sixth century, blended with the remnants of an ancient myth of the fight between a dragon and a godlike hero. So an old Vandal myth of a pair of divine youths, similar to that of Castor and Pollux, developed through a succession of curious interpretations and combinations into the sagas of Ortnit and Wolfdietrich, who are called kings of Lombardy and Constantinople; and their legends are connected with confused recollections of the intestine wars of the Merovingian dynasty. So the sagas of Hilde, Gudrun, and Walthari, different as they are from each other in plot and scenery, the two former depicting episodes in the pirate life of the Norsemen, the latter introducing us into the conflict between Attila's hosts and the nations of western Europe, yet all three contain the same old mythical basis: the rape of a Valkyrie, the pursuit of the robber, and a violent combat ensuing from it.

So, finally, the Nibelungen saga, the greatest of them all, consists of an almost inextricable web of mythical and historical threads intertwined.

The mythical element is of Frankish origin.[11] There is a treasure upon which the gods have laid a curse; Siegfried, or, as the Norse poets call him, Sigurd wins it by killing the dragon hoarding it. There is an enchanted virgin sleeping on a mountain side surrounded by a wall of flames, to be delivered only by him who is chosen. Siegfried is the chosen one; he rides through the fiery wall, awakens Brunhild, or, as the Norsemen also call her, Sigrdrifa, and makes her his bride. But soon he becomes the prey of demonic powers. He leaves his wife and arrives at the court of the king of the Nibelungs, the sons of darkness, who are imagined as a race living near the Rhine stream. Here, through a magic potion, he is made forgetful of Brunhild and marries the king's daughter, whose name in the later German poems is Kriemhild. The latter's brother

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[11] Cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, *p.* 25 f.

Gunther, in the Norse sources called Gunnar, hears of Brunhild's beauty and sets out to woo her. Unable to overcome her strength, he appeals to Siegfried, and the latter, disguised as Gunther, conquers Brunhild for a second time. When Brunhild learns what an outrage has been done to her, she resolves on Siegfried's death. She incites the Nibelungs against him, and he is treacherously slain, his treasure being made the booty of his murderers. When Brunhild sees his corpse on the pyre, her passion for him bursts out once more; she stabs herself, and is burnt together with her faithless lover.

With this essentially mythical tale there were connected in course of time dim historical reminiscences of the period of the Migrations. At the beginning of this chapter was mentioned the decisive defeat which, in 437, the Burgundians, then settled in the upper Rhine valley, suffered in a terrible conflict with the Hunnish invaders, their king Gundicar and some twenty thousand of the tribe being killed. This king Gundicar is identified with the Gunther of the Siegfried saga, the Nibelungs are identified with the Burgundians, and their collision with the Huns is considered as having been brought about through the latter's coveting Siegfried's treasure. But this is not enough. Although the historical Attila had nothing whatever to do with the conflict between the Huns and the Burgundians, his name also, being one of the most impressive of the time, is connected with the new form of the Nibelungen saga: he is introduced as the leader of the Huns in the destruction of Gunther's race. And finally, his wife Ildico, who is said to have murdered him, is identified with Siegfried's widow Kriemhild; and either, as in the Norse poems, appears as the avenger of the ruin of her race, the Burgundians, by killing her Hunnish husband, or, as in the later German form of the saga, marries him merely in order to take revenge, through him, on the murderers of her first husband, Siegfried. The last touch is added to the saga by the ap-

pearance of the great Theoderic, who, in accordance with the majestic wisdom of his traditional character, here also takes the part of supreme judge. After the terrible struggle is over, Huns and Burgundians alike having been slaughtered by the thousand, the Gothic king steps up to Kriemhild, the instigator of all this horror and bloodshed, and beheads her.[16]

Fierceness of the life portrayed in the Germanic epic.

Even from what has been said thus far, it must have become evident that the chief characteristic of the life portrayed in these sagas of the Migration period is fierce combativeness and reckless bravery. Let us illustrate this point somewhat more fully by a few striking scenes.

Hildebrand.

Hildebrand,[17] the armourer[18] of Theoderic of Bern, has followed the latter into his exile at Attila's court. After many years' absence he sets out to ride homeward. On his way he is met and challenged by his own son Hadubrand, who meanwhile has become a stranger to him. Hildebrand inquires from the younger man his descent and kin. He replies: "Thus told me our people, old and wise ones, who formerly lived, that Hildebrand was my father; I am Hadubrand. Once he went eastward, fleeing before Odoacer's wrath, with Theoderic and many of his thanes. He left in the land, helplessly sitting, his wife in the house, the child ungrown, bereft of the inheritance. Always he was at the head of the people, always fight was dearest to him. Not, I think, is he alive."

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[16] In the *Nibelungenlied* this execution is performed by Theoderic's armourer Hildebrand.

[17] Cf. *MSD.*[3] *p.* 2 ff. P. Piper, *Die älteste deutsche Litteratur* (*DNL.* I) *p.* 145 ff. An excellent account of the warlike aspect of early Germanic life is given by F. B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins* *p.* 226 ff.

[18] About this office, its frequent mention in the Germanic sagas, and its political counterpart in the institution of the Frankish *maior domus* cf. Uhland, *Schriften zur Gesch. d. Dichtung u. Sage* I, 242–253.

Upon these words the father makes himself known, and as a token of friendship offers his son a pair of golden bracelets on the point of his spear. But Hadubrand suspects him to be a trickster, and rejects the gifts. "With the spear a man receives gifts, point against point. Thou old Hun, oversly, wishest to mislead me with thy words, wishest to smite me with thy spear. Thou art such an old man and yet designest evil. Thus told me seafaring men, westward over the Wendelsea,[19] that war took him away. Dead is Hildebrand, Heribrand's son." Now Hildebrand bewails his fate, which forces him to fight his own son; but not for a moment does he think of evading the combat. "Woe is me, avenging God, woeful fate is near. I wandered summers and winters sixty; always they placed me in the crowd of the shooters, before no walls death was brought me; now my own child shall strike me with the sword, crush me with his axe, or I become his murderer. But he would be the basest of the Eastern men who would now refuse the fight, since thou desirest strife so much. Try then the combat, which of us to-day shall loose his mail-coat, or both of these byrnies possess." So they ride against each other with their spears; then they dismount and fight with swords; finally, it seems,—for the end of the lay is lost,—the father kills his own offspring.[20]

Less pathetic, but perhaps for that reason all the more unmitigated in its grimness, is the Walthari saga, as it has been preserved to us in Latin by the monk Ekkehard I. of St. Gallen (c. 930).[21] Walthari, like Hildebrand, has for years been living at the Hunnish court, sent thither as a hostage by his father, the Visigothic king

Walthari.

[19] The Mediterranean.

[20] This tragic end is suggested by comparison with similar tales of other nations, especially Persian and Gaelic. Cf. Uhland *l. c.* 164 ff. A happy ending in the ballad of the 15th century (*DNL.* VII., 301 ff.).

[21] Cf. *Waltharius manu fortis* ed. Scheffel and Holder *v.* 1186 ff. J. Kelle, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. bis z. Mitte d.* 11. *Jhdts. p.* 218 ff.

of Aquitaine. There he has been betrothed to Hildegund, the daughter of the Burgundian king, who also had been carried away by the Huns. Now the two flee together, riding on one horse, laden with treasures stolen from Attila's palace. In the Vosges mountains king Gunther of Worms with twelve thanes falls on him; and there, at the mouth of a glen where the fugitives had rested for a night, a most fearful slaughter ensues. Eleven of Gunther's men are struck down, one after another, by Walthari's sword. For a time night puts an end to the contest; Walthari, exhausted by incessant fighting, lies down to sleep in his beloved one's lap, while she, sitting erect, keeps herself awake by singing. But the next morning the two remaining foes, Gunther himself and his stalwart champion Hagen, ride up to avenge the death of their eleven comrades. And now Walthari's valour is put to a decisive test; he first rushes upon Gunther and with a tremendous blow hews off his leg near the hip. Hagen avenges his master by chopping off Walthari's right hand. But even this does not daunt the irrepressible hero; he slips the stump of his right arm through the strap of his shield, grasps his sword with the left, and jumping upon Hagen knocks out his right eye, slashes his face, and dislodges six of his teeth. Now at last the martial spirit gives way to friendly feeling. The three mutilated fighters sit down on the grass, Hildegund dresses their wounds and passes the wine, and over grim jokes and raillery they forget their bleeding gashes. "In future," said Hagen to Walthari, "you will have to wear a leather glove stuffed with wool on your right arm, and make men believe it is your hand. Your sword will hang on your right hip, and if you want to embrace your dear wife Hildegund, you'll have to do it with the left arm." Oh, you one-eyed squinter," retorted Walthari, "I shall strike down many a deer with my left hand ere you will be able to eat again your roast of boar. But I'll give you friendly advice: when you get home, you had better have

some baby porridge cooked up for you; that is good for a toothless man, and strengthens his bones."

Two figures, undoubtedly among the oldest of the Germanic hero-saga, who, in course of time have become connected, the one with the Gudrun, the other with the Nibelungen legend, may conclude this sketch of the fierceness of old Germanic life: Wate, Gudrun's most devoted champion, and Hagen, Siegfried's murderer.

Wate.

Wate seems originally to have been a sea-god. He is the son of a mermaid; his long grizzly beard inspires horror; when he blows his horn, the land quivers, the sea foams up, and the walls of castles totter. Gradually, as the supernatural in him receded, he became the type of a wild, indomitable, irresistible Viking. In the Gudrunlied (beginning of the thirteenth century), he appears most strikingly on three different occasions. First, when Hettel, king of the Danes, has sent him with other vassals to sue for Hilde, daughter of the king of Ireland.[22] He is introduced to the ladies of the royal household, and has to make conversation. Hilde asks him jestingly whether he prefers to sit and chat with beautiful women or to fight in the wild combat; he answers: "One thing suits me best. Never did I sit so softly with beautiful women that I would not rather with good knights fight in many a hard combat." Whereupon the girls laugh heartily.—Hilde and Hettel have been married, their daughter Gudrun has grown up a beautiful maiden, the Norsemen have carried her away, the Danes pursue the robbers: now Wate steps into the foreground for the second time.[23] At a low island near the mouth of the river Scheldt the Norsemen with their fair booty are overtaken, and here a bloody battle is fought, the famous battle of the Wulpensand. It lasts from morning till night: not so quickly do snowflakes sweep from the Alpine mountains as the spears flew hither and thither

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[22] Cf. *Kudrun* ed. E. Martin *str.* 340 ff. [23] *Ib. str.* 882 ff. 921 ff.

that day. King Hettel himself was slain; when Wate saw him fall, his voice roared wildly, and like the evening red the helmets were seen aglow from his swift strokes. Under cover of the night the Norsemen escape, and the Danes return home beaten and cast down. Usually, when Wate returned from a battle, he came with trumpet-sound and glee. Now he rode still and silent into the castle; and when the people thronged around him and asked about their friends, he answered: "I will not lie; they have all been slain. Do not weep and wail, from death no one returns; but when our children are grown men, the time will come for revenge."

Fourteen years have gone; Gudrun has remained a captive of the Norsemen, faithfully preserving in exile and misery her troth plighted to king Herwig of Sealand. Now at last the ships of the rescuing Danes appear. Wate leads them; he is fuming with long-repressed rage and thirst for fight.[24] He delights in the coolness of the night that precedes the battle. "How cheerful the air is," he exclaims, "how calm and refreshing! how softly the moon shines! how exalted I feel!" In the morning he blows his horn so loud that it is heard for thirty miles along the coast. At the head of his men he presses into the crowd of the Norsemen. Their chief, Hartmut, makes a stand against him, but is on the point of succumbing to his blows when Gudrun observes them from a window. Moved by womanly pity, she calls upon her lover Herwig to save Hartmut, although he is her enemy, from the fierce Wate. Herwig delivers her message to Wate, but he cries: "Out of the way, Herwig! If I obeyed women, I should be out of my mind. If I spared our enemies, I should have to reproach myself. He shall suffer for his misdeeds." And when Herwig tries to step between the two, he receives such a blow from the old fighter that he staggers and falls,

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[24] *Kudrun str.* 1345 ff. 1491 ff.

and has to be carried from the field. And Wate rages on like a war-god, sparing not even women or children, and not pausing until the bloody work is done.

If Wate, as Scherer has said, impresses us as a rude elemental force, we find in Hagen, added to this physical power, a mind of wonderful keenness and fertility.[25] Even in the *Waltharilied*, where we saw him as Gunther's vassal, he stands head and shoulders above the other knights, and even above his master. But it is only in the *Nibelungenlied* that his character comes out in all its dark grandeur. He is the principal figure at the court of Worms before Siegfried's arrival; through him Siegfried falls; and after Siegfried's death he at once assumes the leadership again. When the messengers come from Kriemhild and Ezzel (Attila) to invite the Nibelungs to the Hunnish court, he immediately feels that it is the arm of revenge stretching out for him and his accomplices in Siegfried's murder. But he is too proud to shun the consequences of his own deeds. He himself leads the armed host on their journey eastward, he knows the way, he is the travellers' help and comfort. When they reach the Danube, he finds some mermaids sporting in the river. They prophesy to him the doom that awaits the Nibelungs in the land of the Huns. But Hagen, far from dissuading his friends from proceeding on their journey, keeps the tidings to himself until he has ferried them all over the river. Then he breaks the ferryboat to pieces and calls out to them[26]: "None of us will return home from the land of the Huns."

Hagen.

The same unflinching spirit, the same heroic fanaticism, the same eagerness to challenge fate rather than await it, he preserves throughout the awful events that follow.[27] Kriem-

[25] Cf. for the following Uhland *l. c.* 307–314. W. Scherer, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 119 ff.

[26] *Der Nibelunge Nôt* ed. Bartsch *str.* 1526 ff.

[27] *Ib. str.* 1761 ff. 1951 ff.

hild betrays her hatred of him from the very first moment that the Nibelungs have arrived at her court. She sees Hagen and his comrade, Volker the fiddler, sitting in front of the palace; followed by sixty Huns carrying concealed weapons, she descends from the hall and accosts the two men in a hostile manner. Hagen, unmoved and coldly defiant, keeps his seat, placing across his knees the sword which he took away from Siegfried when he slew him. And when Kriemhild at the sight of it bursts forth into passionate invectives, he answers: "Why all this talk? Yes, I, Hagen, slew Siegfried; I am guilty of all this evil; let him avenge it who will, man or woman." None of the Huns dare approach him, and Kriemhild has to resort to another plan of attack.

The Burgundian yeomen, who have been quartered separately from their masters, are fallen upon by a large crowd of Huns, and treacherously massacred. One of them escapes, and appears covered with blood in the hall where the Burgundian and Hunnish princes are feasting together. When Hagen sees him, he springs to his feet and shouts: "Our yeomen have been foully murdered. Up, friends! let the drinking-bout begin!" And striking off the head of Ezzel's young son, who is sitting near him at the table, he hurls it quivering into Kriemhild's lap. From here on,[28] his only aim is to sell his life dearly. Like a madman he rages through the hall, striking down whoever comes near him. At night Kriemhild, who with Ezzel and his immediate followers has withdrawn from the palace, causes it to be set on fire. The heat is torturing; the Nibelungen heroes with difficulty protect themselves from the falling brands; but Hagen is unshaken, he calls upon his friends to quench their thirst with blood. "In such a heat, it is better than wine," he says. At last, vanquished by Dietrich and led captive before Kriemhild, he refuses to

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[28] For the following cf. *Der Nibelunge Nôt str.* 2114 ff. 2367 ff.

tell her where Siegfried's treasure is concealed, and when she holds Gunther's bleeding head before him, he exclaims: "Now it has come to pass as I thought: the treasure now no one knows but God and myself; and from thee, thou daughter of hell, it shall forever be hidden!" Thereupon with Siegfried's sword Kriemhild severs Hagen's head from his body.

The finer emotions in Germanic life.

It would be a grave mistake to believe the life of the Germanic heroes, as represented in epic poetry, an uninterrupted succession of combat and violence. The very existence of this poetry is a proof that the finer emotions were by no means lacking in this life. The historian Procopius tells[29] of the Vandal king Gelimer, that in surrendering after a long and cruel siege to the Byzantine general, he asked as a last favour from his enemies for three things: a loaf of bread, to know once more how it tasted; a sponge to cool his eyes that had become dim with tears; a harp to sing his misery. The same contrast between the heroic and the gentle, between ferocity and sentiment, between wildness and artistic grace, pervades the epic songs of this time. By the side of Wate, the grim warrior of the Gudrun saga, stands Horand the singer, not less heroic than he, but full of divine inspiration and melody. He has been taught his art "on the wild sea," probably by some water-sprite; and when he sings, the birds grow silent, the deer of the forest leave their pasture, the worms in the grass cease creeping, the fishes stop swimming, the sick and the well lose their senses.[30] A similar trait helps to relieve even the atrociousness of the fate of the Nibelungs. King Gunnar, according to the Norse traditions,[31] has a magic gift of music. Made captive by Atli (Attila) he is thrown into a snake-den, his hands be-

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[29] Procopius *l. c.* II, 6.

[30] *Kudrun str.* 388 ff.

[31] Cf. *Atlakviþa str.* 28 and *Atlamǫl str.* 60; *Eddalieder* ed. F. Jónsson II, 80. 89; *Vǫlsungasaga* ed. Bugge c. 37.

ing chained. But he strikes the harp with his toes so wonderfully that women weep, warriors are unnerved, the beams of the building burst, and the snakes fall asleep—except one viper who stings the hero to the heart.

Dietrich von Bern.

As to the moral side of life, there can be no question that these epics bring out in all its resplendent beauty at least one virtue, the same which helped in building up the tribal monarchies of the Migration period: the virtue of personal attachment and devotion. The whole legend of Dietrich von Bern rests on the idea of faithful allegiance between the king and his followers. Dietrich has sent out eight of his men to win a treasure. On their return, they fall into an ambush laid by the insidious Ermenrich. Night and day, Dietrich bewails their loss and longs to die. In vain he offers for them Ermenrich's son and eighteen hundred men whom he is keeping as hostages. Ermenrich threatens to kill Dietrich's men, unless he cede his whole realm to him. And Dietrich answers:[32] "Even though all empires of the world were mine, I would rather give them away than desert my dear faithful thanes." He keeps his word, abandons his kingdom, and goes with his faithful ones into exile.

Wolfdietrich.

The same tone underlies the Wolfdietrich legend. Driven from his inheritance, cast about in a life of struggle and adventure, Wolfdietrich does not forget his eleven champions at home, who on account of their fidelity to him have been chained and imprisoned. One night[33] he gets to the tower where they lie in fetters; and he hears their wailing, although he cannot see them, and is not allowed to speak to them. But when he rides away, he claps his hands and shouts: "I am not dead"; and the faithful men recognise the hoof-tramps of his horse,

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[32] Cf. *Dietrichs Flucht* ed. E. Martin (*Deutsches Heldenbuch* II) *v.* 3784 ff.

[33] Cf. *Der grosse Wolfdieterich* ed. A. Holtzmann *str.* 1312 ff.

and rejoice. Here, as Uhland has finely said,[34] faith appears as a spiritual bond, a sense in the darkness, an ever-wakeful memory, a nearness beyond time and space.

Gudrun.

In the Gudrun saga, it is loyalty to the bonds of love and kinship, which through strife and death leads to victory. Carried away from her ancestral home, bereft in bloody combat of her father and many of her kin, Gudrun has been given the choice either to renounce her betrothed and to wear the crown with her abductor, or to submit to an ignominious servitude. Her choice is soon made: she rejects the crown, and chooses thraldom. Twice seven years she performs the services of an humble housemaid, and bears quietly the contumelies heaped upon her by a spiteful mistress; twice seven years no smile comes upon her lips. But when at last the deliverers appear, she laughs out triumphantly,[35] and resumes at once her native nobility of speech and bearing.

Predominance of reckless passion.

These epic impersonations of fidelity and allegiance are too numerous and conspicuous to be overlooked. And yet there is danger of attaching too much importance to them. It has often been said that the dominating ideal of old Germanic life was faith. It seems, however, as though, applied to the period of the Migrations, this statement is far from being true. Faith, allegiance, devotion, the precious inheritance of a preceding age, undoubtedly entered as factors into the life of the time, and helped to bring about the political and moral reconstruction of Europe. But the strongest incentive to action, at least on the part of the leaders of the people, seems to have been a primitive love of power, an indomitable desire to live themselves out, an instinctive impulse to reach beyond themselves. The historical annals

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[34] *L. c.* 234.

[35] Cf. *Kudrun str.* 1318 ff.

of the Migration period, as was pointed out before, are stained with greed, perfidy, and recklessness; they bring before our minds, as the typical figure of the time, the individual cut loose from social bonds, full of animal vigour and susceptibility, keen-eyed and sharp-witted, but without any moral reserve, obeying the momentary impulse, having no higher ideal than himself, carrying the germ of ruin within him.

Sigurd and Brynhild.

No more tragic picture of this self-destruction of the Germanic race in its striving for power and self-gratification has been preserved to us than the saga of Sigurd and Brynhild. Guilt marks Sigurd's path from the very beginning. Before he wins the fatal treasure, he hears from the dragon who hoards it that a curse has been laid upon it by the gods. Without heeding this warning, he kills the dragon and lays hand on the gold. While he is roasting the dragon's heart—his master and companion, Regin, lying asleep near by—a drop of the monster's blood touches his lips and makes him understand the language of the birds. He hears them say: "Beware, Sigurd; there lies Regin thinking how he can deprive you of your treasure; you had better kill him." And so Sigurd kills Regin, and drinks his and the dragon's blood.[36]

Brynhild also bears the stamp of guilt upon her face. She is a fallen Valkyrie. In battle she has defied Odin's order by putting to death another man than him whom she had been commanded to slay. For this she has been put to sleep amidst the flames. When Sigurd, riding through the flames, awakes her, she greets him with a passionate outburst of delight.[37] "Hail to thee, Day! Hail to you, Sons of Day! Hail to thee, Night and thy daughter Earth! With unresentful eyes look upon us and give us victory!

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[36] Cf. *Fáfnesmǫl* 4, *str.* 1. 2; *Eddalieder* ed. F. Jónsson II, 41.
[37] Cf. *Sigrdrífomǫl str.* 1. 2; *l. c.* 43.

Hail to you, Gods! Hail to you, Goddesses! Hail to thee, fruit-bearing field! Word and wisdom give to us two and ever-healing hands."

They are united, but soon Sigurd's evil fate drives him on. He leaves Brynhild, and not only forgets her in the arms of Gudrun, the Nibelung princess, but, disguised as Gunnar, even forces Brynhild to become the latter's wife. When Brynhild sees him again at the court of the Nibelungs, she is torn with wrath and jealousy.[38] "Lonely she sat when evening came, outside of the house, and said to herself: 'Die I will, or have Sigurd in my arms. I said the word, but now I repent it. His wife is Gudrun, and I am Gunnar's. Evil Norns gave us long-lasting pain.' Often she went, filled with gloom, over the ice-fields and glaciers at eventide, when Sigurd and his bride were lying together." Now it happened[39] that one day the two queens Brynhild and Gudrun were bathing together in the Rhine. Brynhild would not allow Gudrun to go into the water further up stream than she. "For why," she said, "should I suffer my body to be touched by the water which has flowed through your hair; since my husband is so much better than yours." Gudrun answered: "My husband is so noble that neither Gunnar nor any one else can equal him." And in the altercation which followed, she betrayed to Brynhild that it was Sigurd, not Gunnar, who made her Gunnar's wife. Now Brynhild's wrath knows no bounds. She incites the Nibelungs to murder Sigurd. In death she is united to him.

It will now be understood in what sense the Germanic epic must be called a poetical reflection of the time of the Migrations. Certainly not in the sense that the epic poems contribute anything to our knowledge of actual events of that time. It is a remarkable fact that the two greatest

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[38] Cf. *Sigurþarkviþa en skamma str.* 6–9; *l. c.* 55.

[39] *Skáldskaparmǫ́l c.* 45; *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* ed. Th. Jónsson p. 121.

events of the epoch, the destruction of the Roman empire and the adoption of Christianity by the Germanic race, are not mentioned by a single word in the whole range of this poetry. And of the frequent and strange distortions of actual history which occur in it we have had sufficient proof. And yet the Germanic epic, as well as the historical annals of the time, tells its tale of the Migrations of the peoples. It speaks to us of the greed and savagery of those German adventurers who terrorized Roman cities and made Roman emperors tremble. It brings to our mind the record of many a German chieftain who, cut loose from the belief of his own ancestors and not yet firmly rooted in the new creed, plunged a whole tribe into ruin by his lust and recklessness. But it also tells us of the indomitable energy, the dauntless courage, the self-sacrificing devotion, and the deep sense of moral justice which, through all the tumult and uproar of those times, remained the priceless heritage of the German race, and which, when the floods of that great revolution had passed away, helped, under the guidance of Christian ideas, to develop a better and nobler state of national existence.

CHAPTER II.

THE GROWTH OF MEDIÆVAL HIERARCHY AND FEUDALISM.

(From the Ninth to the Middle of the Twelfth Century.)

Consolidation of papacy and empire.

THE period of German history from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the twelfth century—embracing the dismemberment of the universal Carolingian monarchy; the growth, under the Saxon and Frankish dynasties, of a distinctively German nation; the struggle, at the time of Henry IV., between church and state; and the beginning of the crusades—is an age of political organization and consolidation. The two great institutions which had emerged from the turmoil of the Migration period as the controlling forces of European life, the Roman church and the Germanic state, are now assuming a more distinct form and gradually define their spheres of influence.

A remarkable contrast in the development of these two powers at once claims our attention.

The centralizing tendencies of the mediæval church.

Ever since the western Christian church had come to recognise the bishop of Rome as its supreme head, the guiding principle of its policy had been centralization without regard to nationality. Everything conspired to make this policy successful. It proceeded from the very spirit of the Christian religion, which addresses itself to all humanity and proclaims the spiritual kinship of all races. It gained powerful support from the traditional reverence of the European nations for the name of that great empire—the Roman—which had been the first embodiment, if not of the brotherhood, at least of the unity of humankind,

and whose political aspirations, methods of government and even language were now adopted by the church, its successor. It was advocated and impersonated by a remarkable number of men of genius and enthusiasm, from St. Augustine (d. 430), who in his *Civitas Dei* depicted in glowing colours the joys of a spiritual existence lifted high above the barriers and distinctions of the visible world, down to pope Gregory VII. (d. 1085), who during his struggle with the German crown opposed to the variety of national and temporal interests the supreme law of the one indivisible and all-transcendent church. It was put into practice and carried out in detail through a hierarchy of most elaborate organization and machinery, and yet, through all its manifold gradations of archbishop, bishop, canons, priests, and monks, directed by one command and given over to one service,—the most formidable intellectual army which the world has seen.

The decentralizing tendencies of the mediæval state.

On the other hand, the political life of the time more and more drifted towards decentralization. To be sure, the empire founded by Charles the Great was meant by its creator to be, in a still more direct sense than the church, a continuation of the old Roman empire. Its boundaries reached almost as far as the dominion of the church; its claims of sovereignty were quite as universal. But this empire was rather the creation of a gigantic personality than a natural growth, and after the death of its founder (814) it soon passed away also. In its place there arose a variety of race confederations, which in course of time developed into the three leading nations of continental Europe: the German, the French, and the Italian. And even within these new national units there was no power which exercised as undisputed and general an influence as the church. As in all primitive periods, when no uniform medium of exchange has as yet been established, the state officials in the Carolingian monarchy were paid, not in money, but by the transference of

power,—power over the produce of a certain tract of land, power over the property and the lives of a certain number of people. This temporary delegation of sovereign rights to crown officials—the root of mediæval feudalism—in course of time became a permanent one, and by the middle of the eleventh century the principle had become fairly established that rights acquired in this way should be hereditary. The consequence was that, as contrasted with the all-pervading, uniform, impersonal authority of the church, the state of that time represented a great variety of small, secondary sovereignties, based on local tradition and personal privileges, loosely held together by common descent and a certain degree of allegiance to the nominal source of all temporal sovereignty, the king.

Conflict between church and state.

At the time of Charles the Great, church and state were in the main co-ordinated and closely allied. The emperor and the pope, each in his own sphere, were considered as the two equal sovereigns of all Christendom. They were the two fountain-heads from which the light of divine justice and mercy flowed out over all humanity; they were the two swords, the spiritual and the worldly, with which the conflict of heaven against the powers of darkness was to be waged. With the decay of the Carolingian empire, however, this relation of the two powers to each other began to be disturbed. The ninth century, the period of ferment in the development of the new nationalities, is characterized by an utter lack of any dominating or even preponderating secular power; this century, therefore, sees the pope as arbitrator between kings and nations, as a leading factor in European politics. There follows a reaction in the tenth century. Under the reign of the sturdy Saxon dynasty the foundations of a truly national German state are laid, and at once an attempt is made on the part of this state to reunite the German kingdom and the universal empire. Otto I. is crowned at Rome as the successor of Charles the Great (962). On the

strength of his imperial dignity he not only deposes one pope and directs the election of another: he even makes the clergy the chief instrument of the feudal organization of the German state. But this combination of the highest political and ecclesiastical authority in the hands of the German king is of short duration. In the eleventh century, during the reign of the Frankish dynasty, the untenable position of the clergy—as in the service both of the pope and the emperor, of the pope as keepers of souls, of the emperor as holders of land—brings about a conflict between papacy and empire (1075–1122) which plunges Germany into a fierce civil war; stirs up the public opinion of Europe in a manner unheard of before; humiliates in turn the emperor before the pope, and the pope before the emperor, and finally ends with a compromise favourable to the papacy, by theoretically separating the spiritual and temporal functions of the clerical office, practically, however, putting the clergy under the exclusive control of the Roman bishop. About the same time the ascendency of the church reaches its climax in the great movement of the crusades, which is both the result and the cause of a most extraordinary popular outburst of religious enthusiasm, and which raises the pope to the undisputed leadership of all Europe united in a holy warfare.

These, then, in a general way, were the social and intellectual conditions under which German literature developed during the first centuries of the Middle Ages. On the one hand, the soaring idealism of an all-embracing church, preaching, if not always practising, the abnegation of the flesh, the essential vanity of earthly things, the nothingness of human greatness; resting on the deep-rooted belief of the human mind in the indestructibility of things spiritual, and the eternal longing of the human heart for a better world beyond the grave. On the other hand, the sturdy realism of a youthful people settling down to the practical business of the day; turning

Conflict between the spiritual and the worldly.

the glebe of a virgin soil, and at the same time constantly in arms against inner and outer foes; taking the first steps in working out a national state, but also jealously watching over the maintenance of individual rights and privileges; living in close communion with nature and enjoying the sights of the visible world; pre-eminently given over to the present, to things tangible and near at hand. It will be our task to see how the literature of the time reflected these two great tendencies; how it gave expression, now to the aspirations of the church, now to patriotic sentiment; how it stood in turn for the worldly and the spiritual, the real and the ideal; and how towards the end of the period it helped in opening the way for reconciling and combining both these principles.

Effect of these conflicts upon literature.

It cannot be denied that at the very beginning of the period there stands a work which in a singular degree is both real and ideal, national and religious; a work reminding us, in the ruggedness of its alliterative form and the robustness of its descriptions, of old Germanic hero-life, but at the same time, by the whole drift of its thought, pointing forward to a higher moral plane than that afforded by the epics of the preceding age: the Old-Saxon poem *Heljand* or *The Redeemer*, written about 830 at the suggestion of the emperor Ludwig the Pious, by a Saxon priest, with the avowed purpose of opening the obdurate ears of his countrymen to the message of Christianity.

Heljand.

It is not too much to say that this poem, based as it is on a Latin *Harmony of the Gospels*,[1] represents the most complete absorption of the Christian tradition by the German mind, the most perfect blending of Christian ideas and German forms of expression

Realistic character of the poem.

[1] Which in its turn goes back to a work of the Syrian Tatianus (second century). Cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, 241. For the Old-Saxon *Genesis* cf. Koegel *l.c.* 288a ff. F. Vetter, *D. neuentdeckte deutsche Bibeldichtg d. 9ten Jhdts.*

before the time of Dürer. The same acclimatization of sacred history to German soil which gives to the religious paintings of the fifteenth century such a wonderful, homely charm, we find in this poem of the ninth century. Christ himself is conceived of as the ideal Germanic king. He is the ruler of the land, the folklord, the giver of rings, the leader of the armed host, bold and strong, mighty and renowned. With his twelve warlike thanes he travels over the land, from Bethlehemburg to Nazarethburg and Jerusalemburg, everywhere pledging the people to his allegiance. The Sermon on the Mount is given as the speech of a warrior-king before his faithful followers.[2] The people gather and place themselves around him, "silently expecting what the lord, the ruler, is going to reveal to them with his own words, a joy to them all." And he himself "sat and was silent and looked at them for a long time," and finally "opened his lips and spoke wise words to the men whom he had called to the *thing*." The marriage-feast in Cana becomes a picture of a drinking-bout in a royal banquet-hall, where the cup-bearers go about with bumpers and jugs filled with limpid wine, the joy of the people resounds from the benches, the warriors are revelling.[3] The air of the North Sea breathes in the description of the storm on the Lake of Tiberias.[4] "The sails hoisted the weatherwise men, and let the wind drive them into the middle of the sea. Then fearful weather came up, a storm gathered, the waves rose, darkness burst upon darkness, the sea was in uproar, wind battled with water." The scene of Christ's capture by the Jews gives an opportunity for gratifying the Germanic love of fighting. Even here Christ appears less a martyr than a hero who, even though betrayed and forsaken, makes his enemies tremble. And hardly any situation is dwelt upon with such apparent delight as when

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[2] *Heliand* ed. Sievers *v.* 1279 ff.

[3] *Ib. v.* 2006 ff.

[4] *Ib. v.* 2239 ff.

"the swift warrior" Peter smites off Malchus' ear.[5] "Then became enraged the swift sword-thane, Simon Peter; his wrath welled up, he could not speak a word, so deeply it grieved him that they wanted to bind the Lord. Fiercely he went, the bold thane, to stand in front of his liege lord. Not wavering was his heart nor shy his bosom. At once he drew the sword from his side and smote the foremost of the foes with full force so that Malchus was reddened with the sword's edge on the right side, his ear hewn off, his cheek gashed, blood leaped forth, welling from the wound. And the people drew back, fearing the sword-bite."

Muspilli-Wessobrunn Prayer.

There is reason to believe that two other poetical versions of biblical subjects, contemporary with the *Heljand*, of which, however, only fragments have been preserved to us, showed this same blending of Christian and Germanic conceptions which is seen in the *Heljand*. One of these fragments, the so-called *Wessobrunn Prayer* (c. 800),[6] describes the creation of the world in a manner remarkably similar to the cosmogony of the *Elder Edda*. The other, the so-called *Muspilli* (c. 850),[7] depicts the last judgment in words which cannot fail to suggest the old Germanic idea of the conflagration of the world.[8] "The

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[5] *Heliand v.* 4865 ff.

[6] It was found in a codex of the Bavarian monastery Wessobrunn, which contains among other things an exposition of the seven liberal arts, the verses on the world's creation being introduced as a specimen of poetical diction. The beginning (*MSD.* I, 1. Piper, *l. c. p.* 139) reads: "This I learned among men as the greatest of wonders that once there was no earth nor sky nor tree nor hill nor brook nor the shining sun nor the glistening moon nor the glorious sea." compare with this *Vǫlospǫ́ str.* 3; *Eddalieder* ed. F. Jónsson I, 1. Cf., however, Kelle, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 75 ff.

[7] This name was given to it by Schmeller, the first editor of the fragment, on account of the word mûspilli = earth-destruction occurring in it.

[8] *v.* 51 ff.; *MSD.* I, 10, Piper *l. c. p.* 154. Compare *Vǫlospǫ́ str.* 39, *l. c.* 7. Cf. Kögel, *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* I, 324 f.

mountains take fire, not a tree remains standing on the earth, the waters run dry, the sea is swallowed up, the heavens stand ablaze, the moon falls, Midgard is aglow."

These expressions, however, in the ninth century, of old Germanic conceptions and ideals in the midst of Christian surroundings, were only a remnant of a time gone by, a last offshoot, as it were, of the great pan-Germanic uprising which had received its final political form in the Carolingian empire. As the century passes on, bringing in its train the gradual dismemberment of that empire and the gradual but steady growth and expansion of the Roman church, literature also assumes more and more an exclusively clerical appearance.

Ascendency of clericalism.

The most striking example[9] of this change in the literary taste of the time is a poetical story of Christ's life by the monk Otfrid of Weissenburg in Alsace (c. 868).

Otfrid of Weissenburg.

The very fact that Otfrid's work—*The Book of the Gospels in the Vernacular*, as he calls it himself—is known as the first specimen of rhymed verse in German literature, is significant of the tendency of that time. Otfrid's personal reason for discarding alliterative verse and adopting rhyme in its stead was his hatred of what he calls[10] "the obscene songs of the laymen," i.e., the

Rhyme.

[9] The same prevalence of Christian over Germanic conceptions which marks Otfrid's poem is found in the so-called *Ludwigslied* (*MSD.* I, 24 ff. Piper *l. c.* 258 ff.), a song of triumph written in 881 by a Frankish ecclesiastic to celebrate the victory, in the battle of Saucourt, of the West-Frankish king over an army of piratical Norsemen. The inroad of the Norsemen appears here as a visitation sent by God to try the king's heart; and the Frankish army enters the battle singing a *Kyrie eleison.* Cf. E. Dümmler, *Gesch. des ostfränk. Reiches*[2] III, 152 ff. Kelle *l. c. p.* 177.

[10] Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* ed. Erdmann, *praef. ad Liutbertum* 5.—Otfrid was a disciple of Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda and archbishop of Mainz, the foremost representative of clerical learning among the Germans of the ninth century.

popular epic ballads. As these still preserved the alliterative measure, Otfrid could not have marked his opposition to them more effectively than by introducing a poetical form hallowed by the example of the great hymn-writers of the Latin church. But there can be little doubt that alliterative verse itself in the middle of the ninth century had already begun to decay, and to lose its hold upon the people at large. Limited as it was to the portrayal of a primitive, sturdy, unreflective life, it would have given way, even without Otfrid's initiative, to a poetic form better adapted to the emotional, reflective, spiritual state of mind which now was in the ascendency, and which Otfrid himself so well represents.

Absence of epic quality.

Nothing is more characteristic of his way of looking at things than the division of his work into five books and his justification of it. "Although," he says,[11] "there are only four gospels, I have divided the narrative of Christ's life into five books, because they are intended to purify our five senses. Whatever sin, through sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing, we are led to commit, we can purge our corruption through reading these books. Let vulgar sight be blinded, our internal eye being illumined by evangelic words; let vile hearing cease to be harmful to our heart; let smell and taste be made susceptible to Christian sweetness; let the touch of memory always rest on sacred lessons." Only, then, as revelations of some deeper religious truth have the phenomena of outward life any interest for Otfrid. He altogether lacks that delight in the surface of things, that sympathy with the visible world, that joy in mere being and doing, which more than anything else makes the epic poet. Consequently his descriptions of actual scenes are far inferior to those in the *Heljand*. The turning of the water into wine at the marriage-feast in Cana, which in the Saxon

[11] Otfrid 45.

poem is filled with the uproarious joy of Germanic holiday life, is introduced by Otfrid with the dry remark:[12] "Meanwhile the beverage gave out, and there was a lack of wine." The Sermon on the Mount, which to his predecessor gave an opportunity of presenting an impressive picture of a large popular gathering, Otfrid prefaces by saying:[13] "When the Lord saw the multitude coming together, he received them with kind eyes and went to a mountain, and when he sat down his disciples stepped up to him, as was their duty. And he opened his mouth and imparted to them the greatest of treasures."

Fulness of the inner life.

But this lack, in Otfrid, of descriptive power and epic emphasis is outweighed, on the other hand, by a sweetness and tenderness of the inner life of which the author of the *Heljand* knew nothing. It is in Otfrid's poem that we first meet those beautiful, idyllic pictures of the Annunciation, of Christ's birth, of the Chant of the Shepherds, and other scenes of the Saviour's youth, in nearly the same form in which later they became the favourite subjects of mediæval poets, painters, and sculptors. Even the master of the Cologne altar-piece does not excel in naive gracefulness and innocence the description by Otfrid of Gabriel's entrance into the Virgin's chamber[14]: "There came a messenger from God, an angel from heaven, he brought to this world precious tidings. He flew the sun's path, the road of the stars, the way of the clouds to the sacred Virgin, the noble mistress, Mary herself. He went into the palace and found her in sadness, the psalm-book in her hand, singing from it, working embroidery of costly cloth. And he spoke to her reverently, as a man shall speak to a woman, a messenger to his mistress: 'Hail to thee, lovely maiden, beautiful virgin, of all women dearest to God. Do not tremble in thy heart, nor turn the colour of thy face; thou art full of

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[12] Otfrid II, 8, 11. [13] *Ib.* II, 15, 13 ff. [14] *Ib.* I, 5, 3 ff.

the grace of God. The prophets have sung of thee, blissful one, all the worlds they have turned towards thee, of old. Immaculate gem, O beautiful maiden, the dearest of mothers thou shalt be!'" No poet has sung more touchingly than the Weissenburg monk of Mary's joy in nursing her baby.[15] "With delight she gave him her virgin's breast, not did she avoid showing that she was suckling him. Hail to the breast which Christ himself has kissed, and to the mother who spoke to him and covered him. Hail to her who rocked him and held him in her lap, who sweetly put him to sleep, and laid him beside her. Blessed she who clothed him and swaddled him and who lay in the same bed with such a child."

Symbolism.

And even the frequent symbolic interpretations which Otfrid is so fond of adding to his narrative, and which have given so much offence to his modern critics, show at least how deeply imbued this earnest soul was with spiritual problems, and how devotedly he clung to the ideals of his life. Who would, for instance, dare to ridicule the following contemplation, occasioned by the mention of the fact that the Magi returned home on a different road from that which they had travelled in search of Bethlehem[16]?—

"By this journey we also are admonished to think of the return to our native land. Our native land is Paradise, the land where there is life without death, light without darkness, and eternal joy. We have left it, lost it through trespassing; our heart's wanton desire seduced us. Now we are weeping, exiled in a foreign land. O foreign land, how hard thou art, how heavy to bear! In sorrow live those who are away from home. I have felt it myself. No other good I found abroad than sadness, a woeful heart and manifold pain. So then, like the Magi, let us take another road, the path that brings us back to our own native land. That lovely path demands pure feet; and if thou wishest to tread it, let humility live in thy heart and true love, for evermore. Give thyself up joyfully to abstinence; do not listen to thy own will; into the pureness of thy heart let not the lust

[15] Otfrid I, 11, 37 ff. [16] *Ib.* I, 18.

of the world enter; flee the sight of present things. Lo, this is the other path. Tread the path, it will bring thee home."

Realistic character of the clerical literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The tenth and the first half of the eleventh century, as was said before, are marked by an intense national movement: under Henry I. (919–936) an independent, distinctively German kingdom is founded; Otto I. (936–973) adds to this the revived imperial dignity; Henry III. (1039–1056) appears as the acknowledged master of Europe. But this renewed national life bears an unmistakably ecclesiastical stamp. The monasteries, such as St. Gallen, Reichenau, Fulda, Gandersheim, are the principal seats of learning and culture; the archbishoprics and bishoprics, such as Mainz, Trier, Köln, Metz, Speier, Constanz, Regensburg, Hildesheim, are the main centres of commercial and political activity; the clergy are the chief support and stay of the central government, intimately connected with the every-day life of the people, in close contact with its work and its joys in field and market-place. This state of things brings about a new turn in the intellectual development and gives to the literature of the period its peculiar, double-faced appearance. It makes monks the biographers of kings, it opens the gates of nunneries to Ovid's *Ars amandi* and the realistic Roman comedy; it calls forth a numerous class of writings devoted to those very subjects from which Otfrid had turned away in holy horror: scenes of actual, present life, but couched in Latin, the language of the learned. It produces, in short, a clerical literature which, to a very large extent at least, is decidedly unclerical; it gives place within the ranks of the clergy themselves to a reaction of the national, sensual, real, against the universal, spiritual, ideal.

Liudprand of Cremona.

One of the most interesting figures at the court of Otto I. is Liudprand, bishop of Cremona, a Lombard by birth, well versed in affairs, indefatigable in diplomatic machinations and intrigues, of a passionate, ambitious, vindictive temper. In 968 he

was sent by his master on a diplomatic mission to the Byzantine emperor, Nicephorus. This mission entirely failed; Liudprand was not even treated with a minimum of international courtesy; he was, as we should say, given the cold shoulder both by the emperor and his courtiers. On his return, he wrote a report of his stay at Constantinople which in tartness of expression, bitterness of invective, and grotesqueness of caricature ranks among the most remarkable documents of mediæval literature.

This is the description which Liudprand gives of the personal appearance of the Byzantine emperor[17]:

"On the holy Whitsunday, in the Hall of Coronation, I was brought before Nicephorus, a man of most extraordinary appearance, a pygmy with a swollen head and small eyes like those of a mole, disfigured by a short, broad, thick grayish beard, with a neck about an inch long. His long dense hair gives him the appearance of a hog, in complexion he looks like an Æthiopian; he is one of those whom you wouldn't care to meet at midnight. Moreover, he has a puffed-up paunch, thin hips, disproportionately long shanks, and short legs. Only his feet are in good proportion. He was dressed in a precious state garment, which, however, from old age and long use was faded and had a very musty smell."

And the following is the picture he draws of one of the great occasions in Byzantine court life, the solemn Pentecost procession of the emperor to the Hagia Sophia[18]:

"A large crowd of merchants and other common people had gathered for the reception of Nicephorus and stood like walls on both sides of the street from the palace to the cathedral, disfigured by small thin shields and miserable-looking lances. The contemptibleness of

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[17] Liudprandi *Relatio de legatione Constantinopol.* ed. Dümmler *c.* 3.

[18] *Ib.* c. 9. 10.—That Liudprand in spite of his Italian extraction and surroundings (cf. Wattenbach *Geschichtsquellen*[5] I, 391) had a most pronounced Germanic race feeling is proven by his violent declamations against the Romans, "quos *nos*, Langobardi scilicet, Saxones, Franci, Lotharingi, Bagoarii, Suevi, Burgundiones, tanto indignamur, ut inimicos nostros commoti nil aliud contumeliarum, nisi: Romane! dicamus." *Ib. c.* 12.

their appearance was heightened by the fact that the larger part of this rabble, in honour of the emperor, had marched up barefoot. But even among the grandees of his court, who proceeded with him through the ranks of this barefooted populace, there was hardly any one who wore a garment which his grandfather had worn new. With gold or precious stones no one was decorated, except Nicephorus, who in his long imperial garment, made after the measure of his predecessors, looked all the more abominable. They had given me a place on a stand next to the imperial choir of singers. When he now came along like a creeping worm, the choir struck up this hymn: 'Lo! there comes the morning star! Lucifer is rising! his glance is a reflection of the sunbeams! the pale death of the Saracens! Nicephorus the ruler!' Much more fittingly would they have sung something like this: 'You burned-out coal, you old hussy, you ugly ape, you goat-footed, horned faun, you shaggy, stubborn, boorish barbarian.' Thus then, puffed up by deceitful eulogies, the emperor enters the church of the Hagia Sophia."

Waltharius. Ecbasis Captivi.

If a bishop condescended to depict events of contemporary history in a manner which comes near the sensationalism of modern newspaper style, one will not be surprised to find that the fiction of the time also, although it emanated exclusively from the cells of the monks and the cloister school-rooms, was at bottom thoroughly realistic and responded, on its part, to the popular demand for broad facts and blunt actuality. In the preceding chapter the fact was mentioned that about the year 930 the monk Ekkehard I. of St. Gallen treated in Latin hexameter the saga of Walthari, the hero of Aquitaine, and his fight in the Vosges mountains with King Gunther and his vassals; and it will be remembered how faithfully and with what apparent delight the translator reproduced the graphic bluntness and rugged ferocity of the old Germanic tale.[19] About the same time another monk, whose name has not been preserved to us, was led through strange personal experiences to produce the first connected animal story of German literature, the *Ecbasis cuiusdam captivi.* He seems

[19] *Supra p.* 22 f.

to have been an exuberant, unruly fellow, fond of roving and outdoor sports, who naturally found it very hard to submit to the strict, monotonous discipline of the monastery. Several times he escaped from it, but was caught and forced back to the life so distasteful to him. At last, in the desolation of his heart, he took refuge in poetry and represented his own unlucky escapades under the disguise of the adventures of a calf, which, left alone in the barn, while all the other cattle had been driven to pasture, finally broke loose and started in search of his mother. At least a few scenes from this poem may be selected, showing how attentively this monk must have listened to the sounds of nature, how deeply he must have been in sympathy with the life around him in forest and field. After sporting about in the meadows to his heart's content, the calf towards evening seeks the shelter of the woods. There he is met by the wolf, the forester, and at once taken to his den, situated under bold rocks, near a lustily flowing torrent. As it is Lenten time, the wolf has been living for months on a very light diet; vegetables, and some trout and salmon furnished him by his two servants, the urchin and the otter, being his daily food. No wonder that he welcomes the calf most cordially. He invites him to share in his supper and offers him a shelter for the night, but announces at the same time that he is to be eaten up for dinner to-morrow, orders being given to the steward to put him on the table raw, with a little salt and spicy dressing, but for heaven's sake without beans.[20] Things, however, turn out well for the calf. In the morning the mournful lowing of the mother cow calls the attention of the shepherd to his absence. A dog, familiar with all the highways and byways of the region, reports that last night he heard a great deal of noise in a robber's den up in the mountains. So the whole herd, the mighty bull at their head, start out to besiege the wolf's

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[20] *Ecbasis Captivi* ed. E. Voigt *v.* 69 ff.

fastness, and with the assistance of the fox, who has an old grudge against him,[21] the wolf is overcome, and the calf trots off by the side of his mother.

Influence of women in the tenth century. Rosvitha of Gandersheim.

It has often been pointed out what a remarkably active part the women of the tenth century seem to have played in politics and literature. Side by side with the heroic figures of Henry I. and Otto I. stand the venerable forms of Mathilda and Editha, their pious wives, and the reigns of Otto II. and Otto III. bear most decided traces of the influence which two royal women, Adelheid and Theophano, exercised upon the political and intellectual life of their time. Well known is Hadwig, Duchess of Swabia, a niece of Otto the Great, a strong-minded, almost manly woman, who whiled away the loneliness of her early widowhood in the study of Greek and Latin and in intercourse with learned men, such as Ekkehard, the monk of St. Gallen.[22] Her sister Gerbirg was abbess of the monastery of Gandersheim and likewise famous for her thorough knowledge of the ancient authors. All the more noteworthy is it, therefore, that the most refined and most highly cultured of all these women of the tenth century, Rosvitha of Gandersheim, surrounded as she was by the atmosphere of the nunnery, and filled as she was

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[21] The origin of the hostility between fox and wolf is related in a long digression, *v.* 392–1097, which indeed forms the larger half of the poem. The first comprehensive animal-epic is the *Isengrimus* (c. 1148).

[22] Ekkehard II., tutor of the emperor Otto II., not the author of *Waltharius.*—Foremost among the representatives of clerical learning in the tenth and eleventh centuries are Ekkehard's cousin Notker III., surnamed the German (d. 1022), the head of the St. Gallen cloister-school, the translator of the Psalms, of Boethius, Aristotle, and Marcianus Capella; Williram abbot of Ebersberg, author of a paraphrase of the *Song of Solomon* (c. 1065); the historians Widukind of Corvey (*Res gestae Saxonicae,* c. 967), Thietmar of Merseburg (*Chronicon,* 1018), Ekkehard IV. of St. Gallen (*Casus S. Galli,* c. 1035), Hermann of Reichenau (*Chronicon,* 1054), Adam of Bremen (*Gesta pontificum Hammenburgensium,* c. 1072), Lambert of Hersfeld (*Annales,* 1077).

with a fiery enthusiasm for Christian holiness and purity, was carried away by the naturalistic current of the time, like the rest of her contemporaries. The one theme of her plays—which, by the way, are the first dramatic attempts in the literatures of modern Europe—is the battle of vice and virtue, the triumph of Christian martyrdom over the temptations and sins of this world. But the world is not a shadowy abstraction to this maiden dramatist, as it has been and is to so many didactic and homiletic writers. It is a living being, a monster to be sure, heinous and doomed, but yet alluring and strangely human. None of her plays passes beyond the range of a dramatic sketch. Most of them consist only of a few scenes. There is hardly any attempt at the development of character. But it is astonishing how well Rosvitha understands with a few bold touches, with a few glaring colours, to bring before us an image of life.

Here are two scenes of her *Dulcitius*, a play which very properly has been called a sacred farce.[23] Dulcitius, a Roman general, has, by order of the emperor Diocletian, thrown three Christian maidens into prison. Seized with wanton desire, he goes to see them at night. On approaching the prison he asks the guard: "How do the prisoners behave themselves to-night?" Guard: "They are singing hymns." Dulc.: "Let us go nearer." Guard: "You can hear the silvery sound of their voices from afar." Dulc.: "You stand here and keep watch with the lanterns; I'll go and see them myself." The next scene shows the interior of the prison with the three maidens, Agape, Irene, Chionia. Agape: "What a noise there is in front of the door!" Irene: "The wretched Dulcitius enters." Chiona: "God be with us!" Agape: "Amen." Chiona: "What can that clatter mean among the pots and kettles and pans in the kitchen?" Irene: "Let us see what it is. Come let us look through

Dulcitius.

[23] Cf. *Die Werke der Hrotsvitha* ed. K. A. Barack *p.* 180 ff.

the chinks of the wall." Agape: "What do you see?" Irene: "The fool, he is out of his mind; he fancies he is embracing us." Agape: "Why, what does he do?" Irene: "He is holding the pots caressingly on his lap. Now he goes for the pans and kettles and kisses them tenderly." Chiona: "How funny!" Irene: "And his face and his hands and his clothes are soiled and blackened all over by his imaginary sweethearts." Chiona: "That is right: it is the colour of Satan, who possesses him."

Abraham.

In another play, entitled *Abraham*, an old hermit of that name hears that his stepdaughter, after having eloped with an adventurer, is now living in abject misery. He at once sets out to rescue her, and finds her in a house of ill-repute. Having introduced himself under a false name, he comes to see the full depth of moral wretchedness into which the poor woman has fallen. Then throwing off his mask, he exclaims[24]: "O my daughter, part of my soul, Maria, do you recognise the old man who with fatherly love brought you up and betrothed you to the Son of the Heavenly Ruler?" Now there ensues the following dialogue, which one would not be surprised to find in a drama of Sardou. Maria: "Woe is me! My father and teacher Abraham it is whom I hear." Abraham: "What is it, child?" M.: "Oh, misery!" A.: "Whither has flown that sweet angelic voice which formerly was yours?" M.: "Gone, forever gone!" A.: "Your maiden purity, your virgin modesty, where are they?" M.: "Lost, irretrievably lost." A.: "What reward, unless you repent, is before you? You that plunged wilfully from heavenly heights into the depths of hell!" M.: "Oh!" A.: "Why did you flee from me? Why did you conceal your misery from me—from me who would have prayed and done penance for you?" M.: "After I had fallen a victim to sin I did not dare approach you." A.: "To sin

[24] Hrotsvitha 229 ff. For the *Callimachus* cf. Scherer *l.c.* 58.

is human, to persist in sin is devilish. He who stumbles is not to be blamed, only he who neglects to rise as quickly as possible." M. (throwing herself down): "Woe is me, miserable one!" A.: "What do you throw yourself down? Why do you lie on the ground motionless? Arise! Listen to my words."

Ruodlieb.

As the last example of the predominance of the realistic taste in the clerical literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries a work may briefly be mentioned which has been called the first novel of modern European literature, the *Ruodlieb*, written by an unknown monk of the Bavarian monastery Tegernsee about 1030. Under the form of a story of love and adventure, into which we cannot here enter, this work gives us a vivid and complete picture of German life in the first half of the eleventh century.[25] We see the king, surrounded by his vassals in ceremonious splendour; we see a most elaborate, somewhat heavy etiquette of courtly manners; we see a rural population, rough and uncultivated, but full of sturdy thriftiness. We have hunting and fishing scenes, battles and diplomatic negotiations,[26] country fairs, murders, mobs, criminal proceedings, flirtations, weddings, scenes of domestic happiness and misfortune,—hardly any feature of life remains untouched. And here again, as in the works mentioned before, we find a carefulness of delineation, an exactness in reproducing outward happenings, and a realistic love of detail which is truly astonishing, and which we should hardly expect in men drawn by their calling towards the spiritual, if we did not know that by the same class of men were done those wonderfully minute and careful illumina-

[25] Cf. *Ruodlieb* ed. F. Seiler, *introd. p.* 81.

[26] One of these negotiations, *l. c. p.* 226 ff., is depicted so much in accordance with historical reports about a meeting between emperor Henry II. and king Robert of France, which took place in 1023, that W. v. Giesebrecht, *Kaiserzeit*[2] II, 602, has felt justified to use this chapter of the *Ruodlieb* as a historical document.

tions and miniatures of mediæval manuscripts, which bring the life of the Middle Ages perhaps more vividly before our eyes than anything else can do.

New impulse given to national life through the investiture conflicts and the crusades.

From the middle of the eleventh to the last decades of the twelfth century there follows a transition-period. Two events of far-reaching import stand in the foreground of the political interest of this epoch: the struggle between church and state, and the beginning of the crusades. Both events, while raising the supremacy of the church to its highest pitch, at the same time set free popular forces hitherto bound. To be sure, both the crusades and the wars of investiture had their evil consequences, the former by fostering that spirit of aimless adventure and waste of energy which found its most characteristic type in the figure of the knight-errant, the latter by giving rise to a violent party hatred which prevented the formation of a strong national executive. But what do these evils count compared with the elevation of the whole national life, the quickening of religious feeling, the widening of the intellectual horizon, brought about by these great movements?

Whether priests should be allowed to marry; whether the king or the pope was to appoint bishops; whether the pope had the right to absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance to the king,—these were questions, not of theological interest, but of the most direct bearing on the everyday life of the people. And the mere putting of these questions could not fail to bring both clergy and laity into closer contact with the great problems of the day; so that it is perhaps not too much to say that the struggle between church and state at the time of Gregory VII. created public opinion in Germany, and not only in Germany but in Europe. On the other hand, however large an admixture of worldly motives there may have been in the crusade enthusiasm, it certainly cannot be denied that here, for the first time in history, we find the leading classes of Europe

the clergy and the nobility, united in one great ideal undertaking, an undertaking which lifts even the average man into a higher sphere and kindles a flame of human brotherhood even in enemies.

In short, the time of fulfilment is ripening, a time is approaching which will make the spiritual worldly and the worldly spiritual, and bring forth a literature more real than the speculative flight of Otfrid's asceticism and more ideal than the narrow sensualism of the *Ruodlieb.* Let us take a brief glance at the literary symptoms of this approaching reconciliation.

The Spielmannsdichtung. Koenig Rother. Herzog Ernst.

A fact not without importance, which, however, can here be only hinted at, is the stepping into prominence, at the beginning of the twelfth century, of the minstrel poetry. When, after the period of the Migrations, the old heroic poetry was banished from the banquet-halls of kings, it took refuge with the lower people, and became the property of wandering gleemen. During the centuries of prevailing clerical literature these popular singers seem to have led a very humble and, as a rule, a rather doubtful existence, ranking in the same class with jugglers and tricksters, and appealing in the main to a vulgar taste.[27] Now the social position of these minstrels begins to be raised, they begin to regain the favour of the nobility, they begin to assume a more dig-

[27] Still cruder are such poems as *St. Oswald* (cf. *Die Spielmannsdichtung, DNL.* II, 1, *p.* 146 ff.), *Orendel* (*ib.* 170 ff.), *Salman und Morolf* (*ib.* 196 ff.), clumsy conglomerations of fantastic adventure, farcical satire, and commonplace morality. They are, however, noteworthy as testifying to the social aspirations of the gleemen of the twelfth century. In every one of these poems the gleeman (for in *St. Oswald* the raven takes the gleeman's rôle) performs an important part, as merrymaker, as messenger, as trusty and shrewd counsellor, as indefatigable helper in need. In *Salman und Morolf,* king Solomon himself is entirely overshadowed by his versatile brother, who very fittingly has been called the ideal gleeman. Cf. W. Golther, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. bis z. Ausg. d. MA. p.* 110.

nified tone. And what is most significant, they treat by preference subjects which show the influence of the crusades. No doubt the sensational still prevails in these poems. Even in the best of them, such as *König Rother* (c. 1150) and *Herzog Ernst* (c. 1175), the imagination is crowded with stupendous monstrosities. King Rother on his voyage to Constantinople is accompanied by giants, one of whom is so ferocious that he must be led by a chain, while another is so abnormally strong that when he stamps his foot it goes into the ground up to his knee.[28] Duke Ernst, during his adventurous expeditions in the Orient, fights against cranes and griffins, pygmies and giants, against men so flat-footed that they use their feet as umbrellas, against others with ears so long that they cover their nakedness with them.[29] However absurd such exaggerations appear to us, even these exotic extravagances throw light on the influx of new ideas brought about through the crusades. And in this lies the chief importance of the minstrel song as a whole. It shows that the representation of that which is near at hand and familiar does not any longer satisfy the popular taste; that men are attempting to assimilate foreign ideas; that the distant begins to exert its fantastic charm; that German literature is beginning to take flights into regions heretofore unexplored.

New idealism in clerical literature.

Of still greater significance than this development of the minstrel song is a revolution which simultaneously takes place in the form and spirit of the clerical literature. It has been made sufficiently clear, it seems, that this literature—although confined to Latin, the language of books and of the past, as its vehicle of expression—was up to this time mainly given over to a portrayal of things present and visible. Now we observe a change in both respects. The clerical writers begin to

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[28] *König Rother* ed. H. Rückert *v.* 758 ff. 942 f.

[29] *Herzog Ernst* ed. K. Bartsch *v.* 2845 ff. 4114 ff. 4669 ff. 4813 ff.

adopt the German language, and at the same time they begin to imbue their writings with a larger sentiment, to evince a higher view of human life, to draw characters of a deeper meaning, to bestow less attention upon accurate description of details, and to bring out more fully the outlines and proportions of the whole. Let us observe the manifestations of this new spirit in two poems,[30] which belong to the best productions of clerical literature in the twelfth century, and which stand fittingly at the close of this review of the preclassic period in the mediæval literature of Germany: the *Rolandslied* of the pfaffe Konrad (c. 1132) and the *Alexanderlied* of the pfaffe Lamprecht (c. 1138).

Rolandslied.

A comparison of the German *Rolandslied* with its French model cannot but be unfavourable to the former. It altogether lacks that patriotic joyousness, that fiery enthusiasm for "sweet France" and her glorious heroes, which make the *Chanson de Roland* such an important testimony to the growth of French national feeling.

[30] These two poems, however, do not stand alone. The same combination of the worldly and the spiritual which we observe in the *Rolandslied* and *Alexanderlied* is manifested in not a small number of clerical poems of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, of which it may suffice here to mention Ezzo's *Song of Redemption* (c. 1060), the *Wiener Genesis* (c. 1070), the *Annolied* (before 1100), the so-called elder *Judith* (c. 1110), the *Life of Jesus* formerly ascribed to the nun Ava (c. 1120), the *Kaiserchronik* (c. 1150, written probably by Konrad, the author of the *Rolandslied*), the *Arnsteiner Marienleich* (c. 1150), the *Life of Mary* by the priest Wernher (c. 1172), the legend of *Pilatus* (c. 1180). Cf. *MSD.*; Piper, *D. geistl. Dichtung d. MA.*, *DNL.* III; and *Spielmannsdichtung l. c.* II, 2. All these poems are marked by childlike purity of feeling and simple delight in the passing show of existence, and at the same time betray a deep sense of the eternal mystery of things. On the other hand, even in the violent declamations of Heinrich of Melk (c. 1160, cf. H. Hildebrand, *Didaktik aus d. Zt. d. Kreuzzüge*, *DNL.* IX, 69 ff.) against the world and its treacherous splendour there is a power of human passion which shows that he, too, felt himself under the spell of the world's realities.

But this lack of a strong national consciousness in the German poem we are made to forget by a religious fervour which is not of the monkish, world-abjuring type, but heroic, masculine, world-conquering. Not until our own century, when Uhland's ballads infused a new life into the old legend, has the tale of Kaiser Karl and his paladins received a more worthy interpretation in German literature than in the *Rolandslied.* As Karl Bartsch has said,[31] "the spirit of the Old Testament breathes in this poem."

What a wonderful majesty is poured out over the figure of emperor Karl! When he hears of the heathenish horrors in Spain, that the Saracens venerate idols and have no fear of God, he grows very sad and beseeches the Creator of mankind to rescue his people and to deliver heathendom from the dark night of hell. An angel appears calling upon him to go forth and fight against the reprobate. All night the emperor lies in fervent prayer; in the morning he summons his twelve paladins and tells them that they are chosen to win the crown of martyrdom, which shines as brightly as the morning star.[32] When the messengers of the Saracens, bearing a deceitful offer of submission, appear before him, they find him playing at chess. Without asking, they recognise him by the fiery glance of his eyes, which they can bear as little as the rays of the midday sun. Three times the chief of the ambassadors addresses him, declaring the willingness of his master to accept Christianity. The emperor, his head bowed down, listens silently; at last he raises his face and, as if moved by divine inspiration, breaks out in praise of the Almighty.[33]

What a truly great picture of Christian heroism is the scene of Roland's death on the battle-field of Roncesval! After accomplishing most wonderful deeds of prowess,

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[31] *Das Rolandslied* ed. Bartsch, *introd. p.* 14.
[32] *Ib. v.* 31 ff. [33] *Ib. v.* 675 ff.

mortally wounded, he sits down on the stump of a tree. A Saracen, believing him dead, steals up to him to rob him of his sword and horn. But Roland, lifting his horn, breaks it upon the helmet of the coward so that the blood leaps forth from his eyes. Then, feeling that his hour has come, he tries to destroy his dear sword Durendarte. He grasps it with both hands; ten times he dashes it against the rock, but in vain: the sword remains without notch or blemish. Now he addresses it, calls up the memory of all the deeds which it has done, of all the enemies which it has conquered, and then bids it farewell. He takes off his gauntlet and holds it up to heaven; an angel appears and receives it. Roland commends his soul to the heavenly Father; and as he dies, the earth quivers, the thunder rolls, the sun is darkened, and the sea is swept by mighty whirlwinds.[34]

Alexanderlied.

If in the *Rolandslied* the ideal religious hero of the time of the crusades is exhibited, the author of the *Alexanderlied* makes at least an attempt at representing the ideal worldly hero. What strange transformations the great Alexander has undergone from the time of his death to the twelfth century! Almost all the nations of southern Europe and the Orient have contributed in changing him from an historical figure into a hero of legend. The Greeks saw in him a new Dionysos. The Egyptians made him the son of a fabulous magician. The Jews regarded him as the representative of human presumptuousness, and told of his attempted conquest of paradise. The Byzantines made him a predecessor of their emperors, and tried to back up their claims on Italy with a fictitious Italian expedition of his. The Persians changed him into the hero of a fairy tale, who knows the hidden powers of nature and who lives entirely in a world of the incredible. All these traits we see combined in the German *Alexanderlied;* and if the combination is neither very original—for its author,

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[34] *Rolandslied v.* 6771 ff.

like the poet of the *Rolandslied*, worked after a French model[35]—nor artistically altogether satisfactory, it shows at least an honest attempt to focus the manifold and diverging rays of character, to penetrate into the mystery of genius, to look at human life from a free and elevated standpoint.

We may smile at the naïve way in which the poet, in order to suggest the supernatural greatness and fertility of his hero's mind, lends to his body a most fanciful mixture of animal characteristics, making him look like a wolf standing over his prey; with hair, red and shaggy, like the fins of a sea-monster or the mane of a lion; his one eye blue, like that of a dragon, the other black, like that of a griffin.[36] But we can have nothing but admiration for the truly human large-mindedness with which the same poet knows how to treat the heroic as well as the humble, the passionate as well as the gentle, the active and the contemplative, the sublime and the graceful, the gigantic and the sentimental. The description of the grief of the Persians over the defeat of Darius[37] is pathetic in the extreme.

"When the message came into Persia that the king had been beaten, grief and sorrow were great over all the land. There was many a one that bewailed and wept over the loss of his fellow; the father wept over his child; the sister over her brother; the mother over her son; the betrothed over her lover. The boys in the streets, gathered for play, wept for their lords and masters. The infants lying in the cradle wept with their elders. Moon and sun were darkened and turned away from the terrible slaughter. Darius himself went up into

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[35] Cf. *Lamprecht's Alexander* ed. Kinzel *v.* 13:

Alberîch von Bisinzo
der brâhte uns diz lît zû.
er hetez in walhisken getihtet.

Since only a few fragmentary lines of this poem have been preserved to us, it is impossible to decide how far Lamprecht is indebted to it. So much is clear, that he did not follow it slavishly. Cf. Kinzel's introd. *p.* 29. For an analysis of the poem cf. Gervinus, *Gesch. d. d. Dichtg*[5] I, 334 ff.

[36] *Ib. v.* 115 ff. [37] *Ib. v.* 3346 ff.

his hall, threw himself on the floor and longed to die. He cried: 'What does it now avail me that I ruled over many lands, conquered by my own valour? At my service there was many a land in the wide sea. There were thousands who paid me tribute and never saw me all their lives. If they only heard my name they were ready to serve me. Now I am broken and helpless, scarcely have I saved my own life. That is the way of Fortune; she turns her wheel swiftly, and he who sits securely often falls.'"

What a contrast with this is the lovely fairylike story of the flower-maidens whom Alexander, on one of his fabulous expeditions after the conflict with Darius, meets in a primeval forest, and whom he himself describes in the following manner:

"We found there," he says,[38] "many beautiful maidens sporting on the green lawn, a hundred thousand and more. They played and danced about, and oh how beautifully they sang! The sweet sound made me and all my heroes forget our sorrows and troubles and pains. To all of us it seemed that we had found enough of joy and riches to last all our lives, and as though sickness and death could touch us no more. What these maidens were and how they lived, I will tell you. When summer came and beautiful flowers sprang up in the green fields, they were a joy to look at in the splendour of their colours; they were round like balls and firmly closed all round. They were wonderfully large, and when they unfolded themselves, lo! there were maidens in them, beautiful and fair. Women so perfect in body and face, in arms and hands, I never saw. They were graceful and joyful, and laughed and sang. But only in the shade could they live; in the sun they wilted away at once. Early and late the forest resounded with the sweet voice of the maidens; what could be more beautiful? Their garments were grown to their bodies, red and snow-white like the flowers was their colour. When we saw them approach us, all our hearts rushed to meet them. We pitched our tents in the forest; joyfully we received the strange brides; we had more delight than ever since we were born. But oh how soon we lost our happiness! Three months it lasted and twelve days, that I and my good warriors lived with our beautiful brides in the green forest near the lovely brook. But when the time was fulfilled, our joy vanished away. The flowers withered, the beautiful women died, the trees

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[38] *Lamprecht's Alexander v.* 5210 ff.

shed their leaves, the brook stopped its flowing, the birds their song; grief and sorrow subdued my heart, when day after day I saw the women and the flowers pine away. And we left the forest with gloom and sadness."

Alexander's own character shows a truly human mixture of fierce heroism and gentle magnanimity, and his whole career appears to the poet as a symbol of human greatness and human littleness. Hardly any battle-scene of the old Germanic epics is wilder and more ferocious than his fight with King Porus.[39] The two heroes rushed against each other like wild boars; the sound of their strokes was deafening, fire flashed from their helmets, and the green meadows were reddened with blood. In his combat with the Duke of Arabia,[40] Alexander for three days waded in blood up to his knees, and many a one was drowned in the awful torrent. In his meeting with the Scythian barbarians,[41] who are so contented with their simple and barren existence that they beseech Alexander to give them immortality, his titanic nature flames up in truly awe-inspiring greatness. He declines their request by saying that this is not in his power. But when they, surprised at this, ask him why then, being only a mortal, he was making such a stir in the world, he answers: "The Supreme Power has ordained us to carry out what is in us. The sea is given over to the whirlwind to plough it up. As long as life lasts and I am master of my senses, I must bring forth what is in me. What would life be if all men in the world were like you?"

But this same man is as tender-hearted and innocent as a child. In touching words he laments the death of his enemy Darius; in the midst of his victorious march through Asia, he stops and returns home because he hears that his mother has fallen sick. And the wife of Darius he treats

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[39] *Lamprecht's Alexander v.* 4653 ff. [40] *Ib. v.* 2144 ff.
[41] *Ib. v.* 4844 ff.

reverently and tenderly, because he thinks of his own mother. When he reaches the end of the world he is seized with melancholy ; and, repulsed from paradise, he gives up his warlike career and closes his days in works of piety and charity. His death the poet mentions with the words: "There he was forgiven." Of all things that he owned in life, only seven feet in the ground remained his.[42]

Conclusion.

We have followed the course of German literature through three important stages of development. We have seen, at the time of the decaying Carolingian empire, the supplanting of old Germanic traditions and conceptions by an intense ascetic idealism. We have seen how, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, together with the growth of a strong national state, relying, however, on the clergy as its main organ of administration, there develops a clerical literature of a most outspoken, realistic character. We have seen how, towards the end of the eleventh and at the beginning of the twelfth century, under the influence of internal struggles and outward conquest, there arises a new idealism, more human and more real than that of the Carolingian period. We shall now see how in the next period the knightly order, the leading class of the laity, steps into the place of the clergy as the main upholder and cultivator of literature, and how this class takes up the new idealistic movement begun by the clergy, and carries it to its highest perfection.

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[42] *Lamprecht's Alexander v.* 7271 ff.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEIGHT OF CHIVALRIC CULTURE.

(From the Middle of the Twelfth to the Middle of the Thirteenth Century.)

Our story has now reached about the year 1200. What a change in the political, religious, and social aspect of Europe has been brought about during the six hundred years leading up to this date! Instead of the surging mass of Germanic tribes flooding the face of Europe, we find the European nations firmly settled within almost the same boundaries which they occupy to-day; instead of the violent conflict between paganism and Christianity, we find the supremacy of the Catholic church universally acknowledged; instead of the social chaos brought about through the collision of the Roman and the Germanic world, we find a society organized under the complicated system of feudalism.

Mediæval society.

Two features of this system appear to be of especial interest for us of the present day. The first is a remarkable absence of individual liberty. Only as a part of the social whole has the individual in mediæval society any right of existence. Politically he is not an independent citizen, not a representative of popular sovereignty, but only a link in the long chain of social interdependence that stretches from the emperor through dukes, counts, lords, proprietors, to the serf. As a Christian he has communion with God, not through his own individual spirit, but through the interposition of priest, bishop, archbishop, pope; not he himself, but the church

Absence of individual liberty.

for him, administers the offices of grace. In the whole mediæval organism man, as man, does not exist.

But this lack of individual liberty in the feudal system is offset by a remarkable community of interest and purpose.

Community of interest.

It would be preposterous to believe that those great institutions of empire and papacy, during the time of their highest consummation, were soulless machines, fettering the spirit of the nations; on the contrary, they were the living organs through which the European nations at that time voiced their deepest faith and their finest aspirations. It was the masses that supported the papacy; the vicar of Christ on earth was their advocate; in him they saw an incarnate expression of what the many were striving for in vain: sanctity in the flesh, spiritual perfection, an anticipation of heavenly existence. And the emperor, far from being an absolute autocrat, was thought of as the visible symbol of justice on earth. He was elected by the best and most exalted of the nation; he was pledged to be a protector of the poor and weak, a promoter of God's kingdom among men. And the union of these two powers, of pope and emperor, gave assurance of the union of all Christendom in the struggle against the powers of darkness. Even Dante, modern man that he was in many respects, could not conceive of any private or public happiness without the unhampered influence of these two supreme powers and their well-balanced relation towards each other.[1]

It cannot be said that either papacy or empire, in the period which we have now reached—i.e., roughly speaking,

The papacy at the time of Innocent III.

the time from the last quarter of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century—entered upon any new line of thought. It was in the tenth and eleventh centuries that they created and

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[1] *De monarchia* ed. Witte III, 16, 52 ff. Cf. F. X. Wegele, *Dante Alighieri's Leben u. Werke*[3] *p.* 336 ff.

slowly developed their ideals. Now, however, these ideals ripen into the fulness of visible perfection; now they find, if not their greatest, at least their most brilliant representatives and exponents. No pope has ever been in a truer sense the arbiter of Europe than the proud Innocent III. (1198–1216). The patriarch of Constantinople acknowledged him as his superior; the kings of Arragon, Portugal, Hungary, and even England bowed before him as their liege lord; the king of France submitted to his command in a question of his matrimonial relations; and his attitude toward the German empire Innocent has himself defined in ever-memorable words: "Even as God," he says,[2] "the creator of the universe, has placed two great lights in the firmament of the heavens, a larger one to rule over the day, a smaller one to rule over the night, in like manner has he placed in the firmament of the universal church two great offices, a larger one to rule over the souls, a lesser one to rule over the bodies: the papal and the imperial authority. And even as the moon receives its light from the sun, so the imperial power receives the splendour of its office from the papal dignity."

The Hohenstaufen dynasty.

On the other hand, no more impressive rulers have ever held the German sceptre than the princes of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. One may regret their lack of the highest statesmanship, their futile attempt at re-establishing the absolutism of the Roman Cæsars, their failure to understand the meaning of the new life developing at this very time in the republican communities of northern Italy. But there can be no doubt that with all their faults they did much to strengthen German national feeling. It is certainly not a mere coincidence that the greatest German historian of the Middle Ages, the bishop Otto of Freising, was a biographer of Frederick

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[2] Innocentii III *Regest.* I, 401 (Migne, *Patrol.* CCXIV, 377); cf. *Registr. de negot. Rom. imp.* 32. (*l. c.* CCXVI, 1035).

Barbarossa (1152–1190), and one needs only to read his account of the emperor's first entrance into Rome[3] in order to form an idea of the intense patriotic sentiment which must have been aroused by Frederick's brilliant imperial policy. The Roman nobles at the approach of the German army send ambassadors to welcome the king, at the same time, however, to exact from him a promise to leave their privileges undisturbed. But Frederick answers them in the haughtiest and most contemptuous manner. "You have told me," Otto makes him say, "a great deal about the nobility and greatness of your commonwealth. I know, I know it; once there was a great and noble Rome; would that I could say there is one now! But if you wish to find Rome's ancient glory, the dignity of her senators, the strength and valour of her nobility, look at us. All those things are with us now. With us are your consuls, with us your senate, with us your warriors. It is the German knights who keep in check your insolence." And whatever one may think of the fantastic, un-German foreign policy of the erratic Frederick II. (1215–1250), it cannot be denied that his passionate, unrelenting, life-long struggle against the supremacy of the Roman church has in it something truly heroic. He was the first great freethinker of modern times. Undaunted by the papal excommunication, he undertakes his expedition to the Holy Land, and in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre he himself places the crown of the kingdom of Jerusalem on his head. Deposed by the Council of Lyons from his imperial dignity, he declares that, having thus far been the anvil, he now means to be the hammer of the church; and even when his deposition is followed by the election of a successor to the German crown, defeated in open warfare, deserted and betrayed by his most intimate friends, he remains unshaken and defiant to the very last. No wonder that his contem-

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[3] *Gesta Friderici* ed Waitz II, 21.

poraries attributed supernatural powers to him, that they refused to believe in his death, that stories won the popular ear of his having been laid to sleep in a mountain cavern, whence he would come forth again to rally his people around the imperial standard.[4]

During the time of the Migrations, poetry, though the common property of all freemen, was cultivated mainly at the courts of tribal kings. During the long period of gradual consolidation of papacy and empire, it passed over into the hands of the clergy, the chief upholder of both. Now, at the very height of papal and imperial supremacy, it shifted into a new class, which meanwhile had become the mainstay of temporal and ecclesiastical government, the feudal lay aristocracy.

Chivalry

The beginnings of feudalism, as we have seen in a previous chapter,[5] are to be found in the land grants to crown officials, both lay and clerical, of the Frankish monarchy, inasmuch as they created a privileged class of large real-estate owners, who soon assumed within their territories the claims and titles of sovereign lords. Mainly in consequence of the incessant wars of Charles the Great and his successors, this landed nobility more and more developed into the ruling class of the empire. Before Charles's reign, and even during his time, the chief burden and honour of military service rested on the large body of small free land-holders, subject only to the king, at whose bidding they had to appear, armed and equipped at their own expense. After the dismemberment of the Carolingian empire, and throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, this class of small free warrior-peasants was on a steady decline. Not being able to bear the strain of protracted military exertion, they sought to evade it by becoming bondmen of the powerful

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[4] Cf. G. Voigt, *Die Kiffhäusersage p.* 5 ff.

[5] Cf. *supra p.* 36.

landed nobility; abandoning their right of arms, devoting themselves more and more exclusively to the cultivation of the soil, they sank in the course of time largely into a state of ignominious servitude. In their place the bulk of the armies in the twelfth century began to be formed by men, the so-called *ministeriales*, who made skill in arms a profession, and who, by entering into a feudal relation with the old nobility and increasing their power and influence, at the same time raised their own social standing to a level with that of their masters.

Here then we have the social foundations of the order of chivalry. It is a class based on privilege and exemption, living on the toil of the common herd, separated from the mass of the people by a wide gulf of prejudice, essentially unproductive from an economical point of view. On the other hand, it is a class most pre-eminently given over to public affairs, both in church and in state. It was the knighthood who fought the battles of the Hohenstaufen; it was they who won back Jerusalem; it was they who, by establishing a universally acknowledged standard of polite conduct and intercourse, formed a bond of union between the nations of western Europe, second in strength and firmness only to that of the common religion; and it was they who brought about that short but wonderfully productive epoch of German poetry characterized by the Minnesong, the resuscitation of the old national hero-saga, and the introduction of the French court epics.

Chivalrous poetry.

It is impossible here to give any idea of the wealth and beauty of chivalrous poetry; only a short consideration of its most striking features and the greatest of its productions can be attempted.

Minnesong.

There are proofs that even during the period of prevailing clerical literature, from the ninth to the middle of the twelfth century, there existed an undercurrent of secular lyric poetry. An ordinance of Charles the Great of the year 789 forbids nuns to copy or send

"winileodos," i. e. songs of love.[6] The Latin rhymes of the "Goliards" or vagrant students disclose the existence even before the days of the chivalrous Minnesong of a large class of roving singers, given over to wine, women, and merriment.[7] In a Latin composition of the year 1170, by a monk of the monastery of Tegernsee, has been preserved to us a short German love-song of truly popular simplicity[8]:

Du bist mîn, ih bin dîn,
Des solt du gewis sîn.
Du bist beslozzen
In mînem herzen.
Verlorn ist daz sluzzelîn,
Du muost immer dar inne sîn.

But it is only since the full development of chivalrous culture, and under the indisputable influence of Provençal troubadour song, that love becomes the crown and glory of a rich and full-sounding German lyrical verse.

Chivalrous conception of love, as seen in the Minnesong.

As is well known, chivalrous love is something very different from what love is to the modern man. It is not the communing of kindred souls, not the union of men and women striving after a common ideal. It is based on the conception of a playful service, in which the lover is bound to his chosen mistress; it consists in a constant wooing and a constant refusing; it is a matter of the senses, of the imagination, of pride and honour, much more than of the heart. The one fact that in most cases the mistress of the minnesinger was the wife of another shows the unreality of this whole relation. Hardly ever do the lovers see each other alone; to

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[6] *Capitularia regum Francorum* ed. A. Boretius I, 63. On the question of the first appearance of love lyrics in Germany cf. R. Kögel, *Geschichte d. deutschen Litteratur bis z. Ausg. d. MA.* I, 1, 59 ff.

[7] Specimens of "Goliard" poetry, with full bibliography of the subject, in Piper, *Spielmannsdichtung*, *DNL.* II, 2, *p.* 273 ff.

[8] Cf. M. Haupt, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*² *p.* 223.

messengers they have to entrust their most precious greetings; they are in constant dread of spies and eavesdroppers; and if indeed they succeed in coming together under cover of the night, they are separated by the sound of the watchman's horn at early dawn.[9] Something stealthy and insincere pervades most of this poetry. Rarely do we hear the tone of true human feeling.

And yet, if once we enter into this fanciful realm, forgetting that it is largely a play of an over-refined and overwrought imagination, we find it hard to resist its peculiar charm and cannot help taking a sympathetic pleasure in its scenes of longing and courting chivalry. "From love," sings Heinrich von Veldeke,[10] "comes all good. Love makes a pure mind; how could I be without it? I love beautiful women unwaveringly; I know it well, their love is fair. If my love is tainted with falseness, there never will be true love. He is a fool who thinks love a burden." Quite differently feels his contemporary Friedrich von Hausen[11]: "What can it be that the world calls love and that gives me such woe at all hours and takes away my senses? Love, if I only could meet thee in combat and put out thine eyes! If thou wert dead, I should think myself happy." "O my lady," sings Heinrich von Morungen,[12] "if thou wilt heal me, grant me one little glance. I cannot longer endure it; my body is sick, my heart is sore. My lady, that harm have done me my eyes and thy red lips!" "Alas," exclaims Reinmar von Hagenau, the teacher of Walther von der Vogelweide,[13] "alas that I forgot to speak when she sat by my side! That grieves me to this very day. Why did I not speak then! So overjoyed was I to see the lovely one that love made me dumb. To many a one

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[9] Cf. K. Bartsch, *Die romanischen u. deutschen Tagelieder*, in *Vorträge u. Aufsätze p.* 250 ff., and W. de Gruyter, *Das deutsche Tagelied.*

[10] Cf. K. Bartsch, *Deutsche Liederdichter des* 12. *bis* 14. *Jahrhunderts* VII, 105 ff.

[11] *Ib.* VIII, 35 ff. [12] *Ib.* XIV, 281 ff. [13] *Ib.* XV, 181 ff.

might happen the same, if he saw her as I did." "Sir Meadow," says Christian von Hamle,[14] "what a joy you must have felt when my lady walked over you and stretched out her white hands after your flowers! Allow me, Sir Meadow, to put my feet where my lady has gone. Like your clover, my heart will blossom if she grant me a kindly look." Tenderly, and almost trembling, Ulrich von Lichtenstein speaks of his love[15]: "In the forest little birds sing sweet songs. On the heath flowers fair blossom in the light of May. Even so my joyful heart blossoms toward her who has enriched my soul as a dream enriches a poor man. Oh that she, the sweet and unalloyed one, would leave me in this dream, if more I cannot have; that I may not awake and weep!" Neidhart von Reuenthal, by preference depicting the boisterous holiday life of the peasants, imparts a touch of courtliness even to village life[16]: "In golden verdure stands the grove. Good tidings I bring the ladies. The heath is clad in a garment of roses. Now then, proud maidens, the May is in the land. Look how trees and meadows are rejoicing. Of yellow flowers I gather me a wreath. Oh come, sweet love, let us go dancing." And even through the wild irony of the Tannhäuser there sounds something like chivalrous loyalty and devotion[17]: "My lady whom I served so long will reward me.

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[14] Bartsch *l. c.* XXXII, 41 ff.

[15] *Ib.* XXXIII, 1 ff.—That the *Frauendienst* of Ulrich von Lichtenstein, finished in 1255, is chiefly valuable as showing the fantastic conventions of chivalrous love in all their unnaturalness and exaggeration is well known.

[16] Cf. *Die Lieder Neidharts von Reuenthal* ed F. Keinz *nr.* 12. On Neidhart's life (from c. 1180–1250) and the character of his poetry, which in some respects represents a healthy reaction against the overstrained refinement of chivalrous Minnesong and an approach toward the realism of the following period, cf. A. Bielschowsky, *Geschichte der deutschen Dorfpoesie im* 13. *Jahrhundert* I, *p.* 40 ff.

[17] Bartsch *l. c.* XLVII, 131. Tannhäuser, who seems to have led

For that you must all thank her; she has done well by me. She wants me to turn the course of the Rhine so that henceforth it flow not past Koblenz: then she will be mine. If I bring her some sand from the sea where the sun goes to rest, she will grant my prayer. A star stands near by yonder; that she must also have. I am ready to do it. Whatever she demands of me, it will all seem good to me."

Walther von der Vogelweide.

All the gracefulness and art of the Minnesong is concentrated in Walther von der Vogelweide; and in him at least we find more than gracefulness and art; in him we find a struggling, striving man. Austria, probably his native land, and certainly the land where he learned "singen unde sagen,"[18] had longer than the rest of Germany remained free from the influence of French refinement. Here popular song was heard in all its artless simplicity; here Walther imbibed that tone of sturdy true-heartedness which distinguishes his poetry from that of all other Minnesingers. Leading the life of a wandering gleeman, which carried him from the Adriatic to the Baltic, from Styria into France, and which brought him into contact not only with the Austrian dukes of the Babenberg dynasty and with the gay court of the Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, but also with the emperors Otto IV. and Frederick II., he acquired that wide experience of the world and that strong sense of country and of national affairs which have made him the first whole-souled patriot in German literary history.

Walther's conception of love is deeper than that of any other Minnesinger. "What is Minne?" he asks, and he answers himself[19]: "The bliss of *two* hearts is Minne. If

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a roving and erratic life, died about 1270. For the Tannhäuser legend cf. Keller, *Fastnachtsspiele des* 15. *Jahrdts. Nachlese, nr.* 124; Uhland, *Alte hoch- u. niederd. Volkslieder* II, *nr.* 297 a. b.

[18] Cf. Walther von d. Vogelweide ed. W. Wilmanns[2] 32, 14. Walther's literary career can be traced from about 1190 to about 1228.

[19] *Ib.* 69, 1 ff.

both share equally, then Minne is there. One heart alone cannot hold her." Woman (Weib) seems to him a finer word than Lady (Frau)[20]: "Woman is women's fairest name, and honours them more than Lady. Many a lady is far from being a woman, but a woman is always womanly." He despises inane conventionalities. Grace appeals to him more than beauty, and the glass finger-ring of the poor girl whom he *loves* he prizes more than all the gold of a queen.[21] "Oh blessed hour," he exclaims,[22] "when I found her who has conquered my body and my soul, when all my senses became allied with her whose goodness has made me her own. That now I never can leave her, her beauty and goodness have done, and her red lips that laugh so strangely fair."

His conception of love.

But even when he sings in the same key with the rest of his fellow poets Walther surpasses them all in the sweetness and natural purity of his voice. Perhaps never has there been given a more perfect picture both of girlish bashfulness and the daring of first love than in the poem where he makes a young girl recall her meeting with her beloved under the linden tree[23]:

Únder der línden
an der heide,
dâ unser zweier bette was,
dâ múget ir vínden
schône beide
gebrochen bluomen unde gras.
vor dem walde in einem tal,
tandaradei!
schône sanc diu nahtegal.

Ích kam gegángen
zuo der ouwe:
dô was mîn friedel komen ê.
dâ wárt ich enpfángen,
hêre frouwe!
daz ich bin sælic iemer mê.
kuste er mich? wol tûsentstunt:
tandaradei!
sehet, wie rôt mir ist der munt.

Dô hét er gemachet
alsô rîche
von bluomen eine bettestat.
des wirt noch gelachet

[20] Walther von d. Vogelweide ed. W. Wilmanns 48, 38 ff.
[21] *Ib.* 49, 25 ff. [22] *Ib.* 110, 13 ff. [23] *Ib.* 39, 11 ff.

innecliche,
kumt iemen an daz selbe pfat.
bî den rôsen er wol mac,
tandaradei!
merken wâ mir'z houbet lac.

Daz ér bî mir læge,
wesse ez iemen
(nu enwelle got!), sô schamte ich mich.
wes ér mit mir pflæge,
niemer niemen
bevinde daz wan er und ich
unde ein kleinez vogellîn:
tandaradei!
daz mac wol getriuwe sîn.

And perhaps the most artistic of Walther's poems is the one introducing his dream of meeting his love at a dance.[24]

"'Take this wreath,' I said, 'they are only wild flowers, but the best I can give you; and I know where there are more gay flowers, yonder upon the heath they grow, where the little birds sing. Come, let us break the flowers.' She took what I offered her, like a bashful maiden she flushed, her cheeks were like roses blooming amid lilies, she cast down her lovely eyes, it seemed to me that never did I have greater joy. The air was heavy with blossoms falling from the trees, I was woven around with delight; then it dawned and I awoke."

And since that time, he concludes, he must go in search of his lovely vision, and try to find it among the girls dancing on the meadow.

His national feeling.

As was said before, Walther's poetry was not confined to love. He took part in the affairs of his country. With flaming words he inveighs against the sectional spite and jealousy of the German princes which, after the death of Henry VI., the only son of Frederick Barbarossa (1197), plunged the empire into civil strife and tumult.[25] With bitter irony he describes[26] how the pope, Innocent III., laughs in his sleeve over the discord among the Germans and takes advantage of this opportunity to extort money from them—"The German coin pours into our Roman shrine; well, then, brethren in Christ, let us eat chicken and drink wine, and let the stupid German layman

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[24] Walther von d. Vogelweide ed. W. Willmanns 74, 20 ff.
[25] *Ib.* 8, 4 ff.; the famous "Ich saz ûf eime steine."
[26] *Ib.* 34, 4 ff.

fast." He bursts into an enthusiastic crusade song; he pictures the scenes of the Holy Land in such vivid language that one cannot help thinking that he himself must have taken the cross.[27] He sings the praise and glory of his dearly beloved Germany.[28] "Lands I have seen many, the best ones I saw with open mind. But evil come upon me if ever I persuade my heart to take pleasure in foreign ways. What would it help me to speak falsehood? German life surpasses all. From the Elbe to the Rhine, and again as far as Hungary, there live the best that I have known in the world. If I can rightly judge good manners and beauty, so help me God, I would swear that here women are better than elsewhere ladies are. German men are well behaved; just like angels are our women. He who blames them has been led astray; otherwise I could not explain it. Virtue and true love, he that is in search of these, let him come into our land. We have delight in plenty. Oh that I could live long here!"

His religion.

But there is something higher than even country and public life for Walther. In a religious hymn[29] of wonderful elevation of thought and feeling he glorifies the Holy Virgin as the heavenly vessel of all purity and bliss. He feels deeply the vanity of all earthly things; he longs for spiritual perfection. "Who slays the lion?" he asks,[30] "who slays the giant? That does he who tames himself." He bewails the transitoriness of life.[31] Was it a dream or reality? Has he slept all his life without knowing it, and has he only now been awakened? Everything about him seems strange. His playmates have grown old, the familiar forest has been cut down, and if the water were not flowing now as of old, he should not

[27] Walther von d. Vogelweide ed. W. Wilmanns 76, 22 ff. 14, 38 ff.

[28] *Ib.* 56, 14 ff.

[29] *Ib.* 3, 1 ff.; the *Leich.*

[30] *Ib.* 81, 7 ff. Cf. his manly conception of honour 102, 29 ff.

[31] *Ib.* 124, 1 ff.

know where he was. In a little dramatic poem he bids farewell to lady World, the devil's innkeeper.[32] "Lady World," he says, "tell your host that I have paid him squarely. Let him strike my name from the book; I have paid off my debt. He who owes him has many sorrows. Before incurring a debt with him, I would rather borrow from a Jew. He waits until the fatal day, but then he takes a pledge from him that cannot pay." Lady World tries to keep Walther; she reminds him of the joys that she has given him, of the loneliness that will befall him without her. But Walther knows her only too well: "Your face is beautiful and fair, but at your back there are horrible monsters; always will I hate you. God give you a good night, lady World; I must go to my own resting-place."

The Middle High German folk-epic.

The second important outgrowth of chivalrous civilization consists in the revival which the ancient Germanic hero-saga received at the hands of wandering minstrels, in other words, in the Middle High German folk-epics. The principal subjects of these epics—the Nibelungen legend, the Gudrun legend, the legends of Dietrich von Bern, of Walthari, of Ortnit and Wolfdietrich—we have considered in connection with the time in which they first took shape, the period of the Migrations. What interests us here is certain features of their remodelled form which reflect the age of knightly culture and refinement.

Modernization of the ancient hero-saga.

That from an artistic point of view the change from the heroic freedom of the old Germanic epic to the conventional courtliness and the equally conventional grotesqueness of minstrel poetry was far from being a gain is too apparent to require more than passing comment. One need only compare the endless descriptions of knightly pomp and tournament, of gorgeous costumes and weapons, of decorous speeches and blameless

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[32] Walther von d. Vogelweide ed. W. Wilmanns 100, 24 ff.

manners, which form the bulk of poems like *Ortnit*, *Wolfdietrich*, *Virginal*, *Biterolf und Dietleib* (thirteenth century), with the tragic brevity and compactness of the ancient lay of Hildebrand; or the clownish brutality of such a character as the monk Ilsan, the most striking figure of the *Rosengarten* (also thirteenth century), with the truly humorous grimness that pervades the concluding scenes of Ekkehard's *Waltharius*,[33] in order to feel the world-wide difference between genuine and borrowed poetry. And it cannot be denied that even the foremost among the poems which proceeded from these attempts at resuscitating old Germanic hero-life, that even the *Nibelungenlied* and *Gudrun*,[34] are far removed from that organic unity which is the truest sign of a natural artistic growth. They give the impression of ruins modernized. The gigantic outlines of the original plan are, in part at least, still to be seen; but they are seen side by side with meaningless patchwork, and the sombre grandeur of the whole is disturbed through the not infrequent effort at imparting to the old subject a new, aristocratic lustre.

At the same time, it must be said that the life portrayed in these epics shows unmistakably a moral progress over the life portrayed in the ancient Germanic hero-saga. It shows a more fully developed inner consciousness, a more

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[33] Cf. *supra p.* 23. Extracts from the poems mentioned, with bibliography, in E. Henrici, *Das deutsche Heldenbuch*, *DNL.* VII. Notable for their pathetic beauty, and undoubtedly remnants of the older heroic poetry, are such scenes as the combat of young Alphart with Witege and Heime in *Alpharts Tod* (Henrici *l. c. p.* 259 ff.), and the death of Ezzel's two sons in *Die Rabenschlacht* (*ib.* 272 ff.).

[34] Both the *Nibelungenlied* and *Gudrun* are the productions of individual poets who attempted to weld together the older epic material handed down to them in a variety of shorter lays. The name of neither of these poets is known to us; both, however, were Austrians. The *Nibelungenlied* was composed between 1190 and 1200; *Gudrun* between 1210 and 1215. For the theories of Lachmann and Müllenhoff, and a full bibliography of both poems, cf. the introductions to the editions in vol. VI, 1 and 2 of the *DNL.*

subtle sense of duty, a finer imagination, a clearer appreciation of self-discipline, a greater susceptibility to ideal demands. It shows the civilizing influence both of the mediæval church and the mediæval state; it shows the tendency of chivalric society toward a reconciliation of the worldly and the spiritual.

Striking is the contrast in which the lays which are welded together in the *Nibelungenlied* stand to the old sagas of Sigurd and Brynhild. To be sure, these lays, as well as the older ones, are filled with crime and hatred and wild passion. Like their ancient prototypes, they extol the manly virtues of physical prowess and reckless bravery. But far more forcibly than in the former stands out in them the image of womanly tenderness and sweetness; and through the din of strife and battle there rings forth a clear voice of humanity and faith. Their subject is not so much how revenge follows crime, as how joy turns to sorrow;[35] their principal characters are not fierce Sigurd and Brynhild, but gallant Siegfried and gentle Kriemhild. And if gentle Kriemhild through a succession of portentous events is changed into a raging monster, this very distortion makes us see all the more clearly and mourn all the more deeply her lost beauty and fairness.

Nibelungenlied.

A picture of inimitable grace and delicacy is Siegfried's wooing of Kriemhild, as told in the first three "âventiures" of the *Nibelungenlied*. In Worms on the Rhine there reigned Gunther, king of the Burgundians. His sister Kriemhild once in a dream fancied that she had reared a falcon, and that two eagles came and plucked his feathers. Her mother interpreted the falcon as Kriemhild's future lover; but she, refusing this interpretation, said: "Never shall the love of a man bring me grief and pain." Siegfried, the prince of

[35] 'als ie diu liebe leide z'aller jûngéste gît'; *Nibel.* ed. Bartsch *str.* 2378.

Netherland, heard of Kriemhild's beauty, and came to woo her; he was kindly received at the court, and feasts and tournaments succeeded each other to honour the guest and to give him opportunity for proving his skill and strength. While the knights were sporting in the fields, Kriemhild would stand at her window enjoying the sight and longing for him who from the very first had won her heart. But he was not allowed to see her, and when he had stayed in Worms for a whole year they had not yet spoken a word to each other. Then it happened that the Danes and Saxons declared war against Gunther. Siegfried, delighted at this chance to give vent to his passion for fight, at once started out against them. When, after, a victorious battle, his messenger arrived in Worms, Kriemhild secretly summoned him to her chamber and inquired about Siegfried; and when she heard that he had surpassed all others in deeds of bravery, she could not conceal her emotion, and "her bright colour bloomed like a rose." And now he himself returned. The whole court proceeded to receive him, and Kriemhild was selected to bid him welcome. As the morning red comes forth from the clouds, as the full moon stands out among the stars, so she came surrounded by her maidens. And Siegfried, when he saw her, thought to himself: "How could I dare to love you? and yet, should I lose you, would that I were dead." Blushing, she spoke to him: "Be welcome, Siegfried, noble knight." His heart rejoicing, he bowed before her and took her by the hand. "How tenderly and courteously the knight went by her side! With loving glances looked at each other the youth and the maiden: secretly was it done."

Siegfried's death is surrounded by the full splendour of imperishable poetry.[36] As in the older sagas, it is brought about through the rivalry of Brunhild and Kriemhild. But in the *Edda* the altercation of the two queens takes place

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[36] *Avent.* XIV–XVI.

while they are bathing in the Rhine stream;[37] here the scene is laid in front of the cathedral. Kriemhild wishes to enter the church before Brunhild; Brunhild steps in her way; there ensues an angry dispute between them, the climax of which is reached when Kriemhild reveals the secret of Brunhild's having been made Gunther's wife by the disguised Siegfried. Now Brunhild resolves on Siegfried's doom; the evil Hagen offers his help. A false rumour of a new war against the Saxons is spread abroad. Hagen goes to ask Kriemhild whether he can by some means protect Siegfried in the coming danger; and she, in the anxiety of her heart and in the desire to save her beloved husband's life, betrays a secret through which she surrenders him into the hands of his murderers. Once in his youth Siegfried had killed a dragon; and, bathing in the dead monster's blood, he had become invulnerable, save in one little spot on his shoulder, where a linden-leaf had lain while he was bathing. This Kriemhild reveals to Hagen, and in order to make him more sure she sews a cross upon Siegfried's coat of mail just on that fatal spot. After having thus unconsciously betrayed her husband, she is tormented by dreadful forebodings. Dreaming, she sees him pursued by wild boars, mountains fall upon him, and she loses sight of him. The next morning she beseeches Siegfried to stay at home, but he laughs at her presentiments and leaves her, as confident as ever. The war rumours are now denied and a hunting party is arranged instead. Siegfried displays all the heroic elements of his character; he kills lions, boars, and buffaloes; finally he catches a bear, fastens him to his horse, and gallops back to the tents. Then he lets the bear loose into the kitchen; the cooks run about in wild confusion, but Siegfried laughingly runs after him and catches him again. Now Hagen proposes a race to a distant fountain, and Siegfried is the first to accept. Although in full armour,

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[37] Cf. *supra p.* 32.

whilst the others have put their weapons aside, he reaches the goal first. Then he leans his shield and sword against a tree and waits courteously until the others have arrived and until King Gunther has quenched his thirst. Meanwhile Hagen has taken away the hero's weapons, and when Siegfried is stooping down to the fountain, he aims his spear at the cross on Siegfried's shoulder, and the fatal deed is done. At the dawn of the next morning, when Kriemhild is about to go to mass, the chamberlain reports to her that a dead man is lying before her door, and instantly she sees it all with dreadful clearness: "It is Siegfried," she cries; "Brunhild has planned it, and Hagen has slain him."

It is true that the events which follow — Kriemhild's change from a sweet, angelic woman into a revengeful, bloodthirsty fury; her marriage with Ezzel, king of the Huns; her treachery to her own kin, and the wholesale slaughter of the Burgundians at King Ezzel's court—are replete with all the wildness and cruelty of early Germanic life. But even here the tempering influence of a milder and more cultivated age is discernible,—above all, in the Rüdiger episode.[38] Rüdiger is the Max Piccolomini of the *Nibelungenlied.* He is pledged by sacred bonds to both of the conflicting parties. He is Ezzel's vassal, to Kriemhild he is attached by a special oath of allegiance; but Gunther and the Burgundians also are his friends: on their way to Ezzel's court he has been their escort, he has received them as guests in his own castle, his daughter he has betrothed to Gunther's youngest brother. Now he has to make the bitter choice between different forms of felony. For whichever side he may take, he will be a traitor to his word; and even if he keeps aloof from the combat, he will be found faithless. For a long time he wavers. He implores Kriemhild to release him from his oath: "Honour and life I would gladly give up for you; to lose my soul I did not

[38] *Av.* XXXVII. Cf. *Diu Klage* (c. 1200) ed. Piper *v.* 2807 ff.

pledge myself." He beseeches Ezzel to take back the castles and countries with which he has invested him: "Nothing will I call my own, as a homeless man will I go into exile." He prays to God to let him die. When no other way is left, he rushes into the combat, and his prayer is fulfilled: he finds death by the very sword which once, in better days, he had given as a pledge of friendship to the Burgundian hero who now becomes his unwilling slayer.

Gudrun.

The same fulness of the inner life, the same variety of emotions, which we observe in Rüdiger is found in the heroine of the other great national epic of the Middle High German period, in Gudrun, except that here the tragic element has only a subordinate part. Gudrun is undoubtedly the most complex character in the whole German folk-epic. She is the first figure of mediæval poetry which in lifelikeness and individual colouring suggests the depth of modern portrait-painting. Even in characters like Siegfried, Kriemhild, Hagen, there is a certain archaic inflexibility and monotony; Gudrun surprises us through an originality and freedom of feeling which cannot be surpassed.

There is nothing in her of the conventional blushing maiden. She is a charming mixture of pertness and thoughtfulness, of coyness and impetuosity, of purest womanly devotion and an almost masculine firmness of decision.

Artificial restraint is something entirely foreign to her. When Herwig, the man of her choice, comes to woo her, her heart leaps up; with girlish exuberance she exclaims [39]: "Believe me, I shall not reject you! Of all the girls whom you ever saw none is more in love with you than I!" When news is brought that Herwig's dominions are overrun by enemies, and that, if left alone, he is powerless to resist

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[39] *Kudrun* ed. Martin *str.* 657.

them, she weeps and wails; she throws herself at her father's feet and implores him to succour her lover.[40] And when, after her father's departure, she is threatened by another wooer with forcible abduction, her sole answer is an impulsive laugh.[41]

It is only after these threats have been put into practice, it is only after she has become a captive of Hartmut, king of the Normans, that her natural buoyancy of temper gives way to immovable composure.[42] Now her lips are sealed. She remains indifferent to Hartmut's proposals, indifferent to the atrocities of the cruel Gerlind. Or, rather, she welcomes these atrocities as a help to make her bear the agony of separation from her beloved. She refuses kindness and comfort; she delights in every new humiliation, and when at last Gerlind orders her to do the washing by the seashore, she answers[43]: "Noble queen, deign then to teach me how to wash your linen. Since I am not to have joy, pray give me still more pain."

What a wonderful transformation, what a welling up of feelings long repressed, when after fourteen years of servitude the first hope of rescue dawns upon her! It is a cold March morning. Gudrun and her faithful Hildeburg are washing by the shore. They see a bird swimming toward them.[44] Gudrun says: "Beautiful bird, how I pity thee, swimming so far on the wide sea!" The bird answers: "I am a messenger of God; and if thou wilt ask me, I shall give thee tidings of thy friends." Gudrun at these words throws herself on the ground to pray; and then, trembling, gaspingly asks and asks, until she has heard of all her dear ones, until she knows that Herwig with his army is coming to deliver her. All night long Gudrun hardly closes her eyes; her thoughts are on the sea whence her rescuers are to come. The next morning she and Hildeburg are again

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40 *Kudrun* ed. Martin *str.* 681 ff.

41 *Ib. str.* 771.

42 *Ib. avent.* 20. 21.

43 *Ib. str.* 1055.

44 *Ib. str.* 1166 ff.

at the shore. Herwig and Ortwin, Gudrun's brother, approach in a boat in order to explore the land.[45] The girls flee at sight of them, but are overtaken. Ortwin asks whether they know anything of Gudrun. Gudrun replies: "If you are seeking for Gudrun, your errand is in vain; she is dead; she died from suffering and grief." Then Herwig breaks out into tears: "She was mine! She was my wife!" But Gudrun goes on: "You deceive me! I know that Herwig, Gudrun's spouse, is dead! If he were alive, the joy of the world would be mine!" And now at last all doubt is gone. "He held her in his arms," the poet says, "and kissed her I know not how often; and what they said to each other gave them both bliss and woe."

The court-epics.

We have seen the manifestations of chivalry in the Minnesong and in the revived national epics. It remains to follow its traces in the so-called court-epics. These epics were not based on native popular lore, but adapted from foreign traditions; they were purposely designed, not for the people at large, but for the exclusive audience of lords and ladies familiar with the dictates of gallantry and noblesse, which, together with these poetical traditions, had been imported from France, the native land of cavaliers. It is in these epics that we find the chivalrous spirit at its height.

Supreme rule of etiquette.

In the *Nibelungenlied* the leading characters, even in their knightly garb, still retain something of the old heroic freedom. Walther, over and above his being a gallant singer, was a loyal and devoted son of his country. In these courtly poems we are met by an all-absorbing sense of class and convention. Of the people we hear nothing; national matters are left out of sight; the whole world seems to have been converted into one vast opportunity for fashionable sport and sentimental lovemaking. There is no background to most of these poems.

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[45] *Kudrun* ed. Martin *str.* 1207 ff.

In reading them we feel as though we were seeing a mirage. It all hangs in the air. To be sure, we meet names which originally were borne by poetical characters endowed with the fulness of national life: the heroes of the Homeric poems and of King Arthur's court. But these names in the chivalrous epics have entirely lost their native flavour. The heroes of the Trojan war have been changed into dallying, love-sighing courtiers; and King Arthur is no longer the champion of the Celtic race in its struggles with Romans and Anglo-Saxons, but the typical representative of a fantastic, high-flown chivalry. With his noble wife Ginevre, he resides in his castle of Caerlleon. Hundreds of brilliant knights and of beautiful women surround him. Among them all the most distinguished are his twelve paladins, the companions of his Round Table, the most valiant of the valiant, the noblest of the noble. They are modelled somewhat after the paladins of Kaiser Karl; like them they lead a life of incessant combat. But the heroes of the Karl saga are champions of religion, the heroes of King Arthur are champions of etiquette; the former fight against heathendom and for the expansion of Christianity, the latter maintain the cause of social decorum. Their enemies are the uncouth and awkward, braggarts, liars, despisers of women, giants, dwarfs. Their charges are noble ladies, orphans, imprisoned youths, enchanted princesses. Even animals in distress attract their generous attention, and usually reward their rescuers by faithful attachment.[46]

Delicacy in the portrayal of love.

Some of the love-scenes in these aristocratic romances are of exquisite delicacy. Famous is the sentimental picture which Heinrich von Veldeke, in his *Eneid* (c. 1180), gives of the love-sick Lavinia when she first sees the noble Æneas.[47] Her mother

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[46] Most renowned is the rescue of a lion from the clutches of a dragon by the gallant Iwein. Hartmann's *Iwein* ed. E. Henrici *v.* 3828 ff. Cf. W. Scherer, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 158 ff.

[47] Cf. Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneide* ed. O. Behaghel *v.* 10031–10631.

wished her to marry the gallant Turnus. But she was quite unsusceptible to men's wooings, and when her mother, a short time before, had given her a long lecture about love, she had hardly understood her. But now, when she saw the Trojan hero, Lady Venus shot a poisoned dart at her. That gave her pain and grief enough. It wounded her heart and made her love, whether she would or not, even if she should lose her mother's good-will. She was hot and cold, she perspired and trembled, she was pale and flushed, great were her pangs. She knew nothing of the wound from which the evil came, but she was forced to think of what her mother had said to her. At last she recovered her strength and spoke wailing to herself: "Now I do not know what to do. I do not know what dazzles and bewilders me so. I was always hale and sound, and now I am almost dead. Who has so bound my heart, which only now was loose and free? I fear it was the grief of which my mother spoke." All night she lies awake. In the morning her mother, seeing her pale and colourless, insists on learning what ails her, and Lavinia confesses that it is love. But she is too bashful to tell the name of her loved one. All she can persuade herself to do is to write it. "Tremblingly she smoothed the wax and began to write. E was the first letter, then N, then again E—great was her anguish and pain—then A and S. The mother spelled it and exclaimed: 'Here stands Eneas!' 'Yes, mother dear!'"

Most pathetic is the way in which in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* Sigune mourns her dead lover Schionatulander. She appears in the poem four times, separated by long intervals. The first time she is sitting by the roadside, tearing her hair in despair over her lover, who has just been slain.[48] The second time she is still sit-

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[48] Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* ed. Bartsch III, 667 ff. It is well known that Wolfram made the love of Sigune and Schionatulander the subject of a separate cycle of poems, the so-called *Titurel*.

ting in the same place, with the embalmed body of the dead man on her lap.[49] The third time she is living as a recluse in a cell, built by her own hands, over the grave of her loved one.[50] The fourth time she is found dead, kneeling in her cell as if in prayer.[51] And similar in its heart-stirring effusion is the grief of the heathen princess Jafite over the death of her husband Roaz, as described in Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois*[52]:

"She rushed upon him, pressed him with her white arms, and kissed him as though he were still living. 'Woe,' she cried, 'woe, my dear husband, now you have lost your beautiful body for my sake. But nothing shall keep me from you. I shall be yours in heaven or in hell, wherever we shall be. Where art thou now, Machmet? In thy help I always trusted. Machmet, sweet god, I have always loved thee. To whom hast thou now left me here? O Roaz, dear husband, you were my soul and my body, I was your heart and your wife. As your heart was mine and my will yours, so your death shall be my death.' She lifted him upon her lap, with both her arms she embraced him, her heart broke. So she lay upon him dead."

Conventionality of drapery and landscape.

It is remarkable to see what painstaking care these chivalrous poets bestow upon a correct representation of the manners and the outward paraphernalia of courtly life. Again and again we are reminded of how this hero or that one bore himself, how he stood or sat, how he was dressed, what his complexion was, or the cut of his hair. We have most elaborate descriptions of castles, of weapons, of monsters, of romantic landscapes. No doubt these descriptions help to make the doings and happenings of chivalrous life more real to us; they transport us into its social atmosphere. But it cannot be said that they add anything to the human interest of these poems. It is largely drapery and nothing more. However varied and fantastic the armours and garments of

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[49] *Parzival* ed. Bartsch V, 761 ff. [50] *Ib.* IX, 66 ff.
[51] *Ib.* XVI, 517 ff. [52] *Wigalois* ed. Benecke *v.* 7677 ff.

these lords and ladies are, almost all their faces look alike; however wild the forests, however gorgeous the ravines, we do not hear the wind rustle in the leaves, or the water roaring in its fall. And over the unending succession of fashionable happenings, of gallant tournaments, of love-scenes, both delicate and frivolous,[53] of bold abductions and miraculous escapes, we entirely lose sight of the real forces and the true meaning of human life. The very thing which called forth this poetry also tended to kill its spirit: aristocratic exclusiveness and social correctness.

Hartmann, Wolfram, Gottfried.

It is the lasting glory of three great men to have risen above these narrow bounds of an artificial taste, and thus to have raised themselves above the mass of the chivalrous epic poets as Walther von der Vogelweide stands out from the crowd of the Minnesingers: Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strassburg.[54]

Traces of conventional chivalry in them.

These men were far from disclaiming the ideas of chivalry; on the contrary they were full of them. They avowedly meant to represent the perfect chivalrous life. They even bowed not infrequently to its conventional absurdities. Hartmann's two most pretentious epics, *Erec* and *Iwein*, are not very different in their detail from the average romances of the knight-errant style; they show the same superabundance of meaningless adventures, the same worship of courteous bearing, the same revelling in insignificant trifles: the bulk of a chapter in *Erec*, for instance, is devoted to the description of a saddle-horse.[55] In Gottfried's *Tristan* the whole plot hinges on so conventional a device as a magic potion, which brings about a sudden change of char-

[53] One of the most frivolous and inane of all these romances is the *Lanzelet* of Ulrich von Zatzikhoven (c. 1200).

[54] Hartmann's principal works were written between 1190 and 1205. Gottfried's and Wolfram's poetic activity falls between 1205 and 1220

[55] *Erec der Wunderære* ed. F. Bech *v.* 7289–7765.

acter, drawing together with irresistible power two persons who only a short time before were kept apart from each other by grudge and hatred. Even in Wolfram's *Parzival* the machinery of the central action is utterly conventional and comes dangerously near being a farce. Parzival on one of his knightly sallies gets by chance into the castle of the Holy Grail, that mysterious symbol of consummate knighthood which forms the spiritual counterpart to the worldly perfection of King Arthur's court. Parzival was destined to be the royal high-priest of this knightly sanctuary. There is, however, a rule that only he shall actually attain to that dignity who, brought face to face with the wonders of the Grail, not knowing what it all means, asks a certain question about it. Parzival, from a misdirected sense of propriety, neglects to ask that question. He is therefore not yet worthy of the Holy Grail. Again entering upon his former life of adventure, he comes to know where he has been, what the wonders of the Grail are, and what question he ought to have asked. A second time he is brought into the presence of the sanctuary, and now, on the strength of the knowledge meanwhile acquired, he asks the required question, and it works to a charm.

Their essential freedom from conventionality.

But how insignificant and almost trifling do these blemishes appear when we realize what these three men, Hartmann, Gottfried, and Wolfram, have done for German literature at large! Being rooted in chivalry, they rose above it; representing a life of class prejudice and conventionality, they preached toleration and liberality; each in his own way, consciously or unconsciously, they demonstrated the superiority of human feeling over the dead forms of accepted rules and dogmas. And thus they have created poetic characters which in their peculiar blending of conventional form with a thoroughly independent spirit mark the same phase in the development of German culture which in the plastic arts is marked by those strangely fascinating, half-

archaic, half-modern sculptures of the fully matured Romanesque style: above all, the portrait-statues in the cathedral of Naumburg, the saints and prophets of the golden gate at Freiberg, and the superb Sibyl of Bamberg.[66]

Hartmann's Erec and Iwein.

Hartmann's *Erec* and *Iwein*, as already intimated, stand nearest the commonplace level of approved chivalrous morality. Yet even here there is at least a conflict between the two principal motives of chivalrous conduct: honour and love. Erec, giving himself up to the joys of domestic love, comes near losing his manly vigour and his social reputation. Iwein, in a life of ambition and restless adventure, forgetting his duties to his wife, comes near losing her love. Both are saved by sore trials and womanly forbearance. *Iwein*, although as a literary production more finished than *Erec*, is, from a psychological point of view, less interesting, the only episode of deeper import being the spell of insanity to which the hero for a time succumbs. But in *Erec* there are not a few scenes of most pathetic power. It is Erec's own wife Enite who points out to him that he is in danger of becoming effeminate. He rallies, and resolves to show the world that he is still worthy of knighthood. At the same time, a doubt in the confidence and faithfulness of his wife arises in him. So, in going forth to meet adventures, he compels her to accompany him, and in addition lays upon her the capricious injunction never to speak to him. The trial of husband and wife in this expedition forms the essence of the poem. Erec is everywhere victorious; Enite constantly trespasses against the unnatural command of silence, especially by warning her husband of approaching dangers. Every time the cruel man makes her suffer for it; but through his very cruelty her faithfulness and devotion are brought out all the more resplendently. The climax of the romance is reached in chapters 16 and 17. Erec undergoes

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[66] Cf. W. Bode, *Geschichte der deutschen Plastik p.* 39.

a terrible combat with two giants, in which badly healed wounds of former fights break out again. With difficulty he rides back to the place where he has left his wife; in dismounting he faints and falls prostrate at her feet. Enite thinks him dead and gives herself up to heart-rending lamentation over her beloved husband. She wants to die and is about to throw herself on her husband's sword, when a count Oringlas of Limors appears, who, enraptured by Enite's beauty, prevents her from committing suicide. On his own horse he takes her to his castle; Erec also, apparently dead, is carried thither, and placed on a bier surrounded with candles. Oringlas determines to marry Enite at once; from the bier he drags her into his banquet-hall. Her loud wailings arouse Erec from his stupor. Like a ghost, wrapped in his white shroud, he appears in the hall. The company is terrified, he strikes down whomever he meets, the rest scatter in flight. Enite remains alone with her husband, who now asks and receives her forgiveness.

His Gregorius and Der arme Heinrich.

It is, however, not in these high-flown representations of chivalry that Hartmann's art is seen at its best, but rather in the humbler sphere of legendary narrative, in stories such as that of *Gregorius*, "the virtuous sinner," who atones for heinous crimes unwittingly committed by retiring to a life of holy abnegation on a barren rock in the wide sea; or that of *Der arme Heinrich*, the Suabian knight, who, like Job, in the midst of worldly affluence and splendour is visited by a terrible disease, who, unlike Job, abandons himself to grief and despair, but is finally healed, both bodily and mentally, through the pure faith and self-surrender of a simple peasant girl. Nowhere does Hartmann betray such a breadth of human sympathy as in this latter poem, the only one of his works which was inspired by a popular tradition of his own Suabian home.[57]

[57] *Erec* and *Iwein* are taken almost bodily from Chrestien de Troyes; *Gregorius*, an ancient subject of legendary literature, is likewise copied from a French model; the "buoch" which inspired Hartmann to *Der*

Nowhere does he show so clearly the liberalizing influence of Christian spirituality. And it may be doubted whether in all literature there is a finer type of naïve religious devotion than this lovely child of the Black Forest who craves to sacrifice her life in order to save her master. How she sits at his feet while he tells her parents of his sad fate which dooms him to lifelong agony unless a pure maiden of her own free will dies for him ; how she lies awake at night weeping and grieving for the poor man, until she suddenly is overjoyed and transfigured by the thought that it is her own mission to rescue him ; how she awakens her parents and tells them of her decision ; how the parents, heart-broken, yet with wondering adoration, submit to it, because they see it is the divine spirit that is speaking through their child ; how, finally, the sight of this lovely creature joyfully offering her bosom to the deadly knife brings about a change of heart in Heinrich himself ; how he recognises his unworthiness to accept this offering ; how he interrupts the sacrificial act ; how he resolves henceforth to bear his burden without complaint and with trust in God ; how this inner transformation is followed by his delivery from disease ; and how his rescuer now becomes his wedded wife—all this[68] is told with such a sublime simplicity and childlikeness that even a poem like Goethe's *Iphigenie* appears cold and studied in comparison with it.

Wolfram's Parzival.

If Hartmann von Aue tries to reconcile inclination and duty ; if he holds up symbols of a life in which "diu mâze," i.e., a happy harmony of instinct and reason, is the dominating rule of conduct,[69] his great contemporary Wolfram von Eschenbach strikes

arme Heinrich was probably a Latin version of the legend. That Longfellow's *Golden Legend* is based on Hartmann's poem is well known.

[68] *Der arme Heinrich* ed. Bech *v.* 295–348. 459–902. 1217–1520. Cf. Goethe's strange verdict, *Tag- u. Jahreshefte* 1811, *Werke* Hempel, XXVII, 203.

[69] In one of his lyric poems, *Lieder* ed. Bech 2, 15, Hartmann ex-

a still higher key. Indeed, with the one exception of Dante, no mediæval poet has treated so deep and portentous problems as this honest, ardent, sinewy Franconian, whose mental physiogonomy reminds one of Dürer's famous knight riding fearlessly in the company of death and the devil. We observed the unsatisfactory and formal way in which Wolfram makes his Parzival comply with the rules of the Holy Grail. But this defect does not touch the real core of his wonderful epic. After all, the Holy Grail is only an episode, although a most important one, of the poem ; its true essence lies in the development of Parzival's character. And who will deny that in this character Wolfram has put before us, within the forms of chivalrous life, an immortal symbol of struggling, sinning, despairing, but finally redeemed humanity ?

What an inimitable picture of the vague sweet dreaminess of boyhood is the description of Parzival's youth spent with his mother in the loneliness of the forest ![60] He loves to listen to the songs of the birds. He roams about under the trees and gazes at them, his bosom swells, he runs home with tears in his eyes ; his mother asks what ails him, but he cannot tell. One day he meets some knights in the forest; he is so amazed by their shining armour that he thinks it is God, whom his mother has described to him as being brighter than day. They tell him of King Arthur's court, and in spite of his mother's warning he sets out to try his fortune in the world. Inexperienced and boyish as he is, he falls into strange errors and incurs ridicule, especially by the too literal following out of the precepts which his mother and other friends had given him.[61] But even in his follies, the chaste, unsoiled mind of the youth is proved ; the good in him, although not developed, is felt as a hidden,

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presses this ideal by saying : "sinne machent saeldehaften man," i.e. a wise sensuousness makes a happy man. Cf. *Erstes Büchlein* ed. Bech *v.* 1269 ff.

[60] *Parzival* ed. Bartsch III, 56 ff. [61] *Ib.* 339 ff. 1629 ff.

unspent force. This it is which opens to him the hearts of all whom he meets, which makes him a welcome guest at Arthur's court, which wins him the love and the hand of a beautiful woman, which even makes him worthy to reach the castle of the Grail without knowing it. But here he entirely misses his opportunity.[62] Biassed by social prejudice and etiquette, he does not listen to the voice of pure human sympathy, he does not ask what the strange and affecting things mean which he sees in the castle ; the whole episode passes by like a dream without leaving a trace. Returning to Arthur's court he hears what he has missed. And now, instead of blaming himself, he revolts against God.[63] "What is God ?" he exclaims. "If he were mighty, he would not allow such a mockery. I have served him as long as I have lived and could think. In future I will throw up his service. If he has hatred, I will bear hatred." So he hardens his heart, in dark despair he defies all tender feelings. That which was not to be given to him he will now obtain by force.

Here the poet takes leave of Parzival for a time, concentrating the main attention upon the worldly circle of the Round Table knights, and their main champion Gawain. Only from time to time Parzival appears as if in the distance, not taking part in the action, but keeping aloof, and in gloomy despair pursuing his path. But gradually we see a change taking place in his soul. He has a succession of experiences which cannot fail to appeal to his better nature. First he meets a young maiden (the above-mentioned Sigune) living as a recluse by the grave of her slain lover. The sight of her self-sacrificing, consecrated life, and her calm, consoling words, awaken in Parzival, also, a sense of humility and a gentle hope.[64] Then, on a Good Friday morning he is accosted by an old knight, who, being on a pilgrimage with his wife and daughters, is astonished to see

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[62] *Parzival* ed. Bartsch *book* V. [63] *Ib.* VI, 1561 ff. [64] *Ib.* IX, 62 ff.

Parzival on such a sacred day in full armour and on horseback. He calls up in Parzival's mind the memory of long-forgotten means of grace.[65] Finally, he falls in with an old lay hermit, who, in a most tender, benevolent manner, shows him his mistakes, reveals to him the eternal wisdom, patience, and long-suffering of God, and succeeds in winning back his heart to a joyful view of life.[66] Now Parzival is worthy to be granted what first in the folly of inexperience he had trifled away and what he had then in vain tried to get by force. He is no longer the innocent, unconscious youth; he has passed through the hard school of life, he has doubted and despaired, but through doubt he has returned to the old certainty, to the belief of his childhood. Now he is chosen, as keeper of the Holy Grail, to become a guide for others also to the highest treasures of earthly life.[67]

Wolfram's toleration.

Wolfram is the most liberal-minded man of mediæval Germany. Although deeply religious, he is far from being a churchman. He even has a certain weakness for the heathen. In one of his expeditions Parzival meets a pagan.[68] They fight with each other. Parzival's sword breaks, but his opponent is generous enough not to take any advantage of this. In the conversation which ensues, he proves to be a half-brother of Parzival's, a son of the first, heathen wife of his father. They exchange words of friendship and affection, and the heathen man is even received into the company of the Round Table.

Although intensely earnest, Wolfram is far from being ascetic. None of his contemporaries has depicted the joys of manly sport more sympathetically, none has felt more

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[65] *Parzival* ed. Bartsch *book* IX, 396 ff. [66] *Ib.* 585 ff.

[67] The poem ends with a brief allusion to the legend of Lohengrin, Parzival's son, who "in the service of the Grail won praise"; XVI, 1107 ff. Cf. K. Bartsch, *Parz. als psychol. Epos*, *Vortr. u. Aufs. p.* 109 ff.

[68] *Ib.* XV, 35 ff.

deeply the comfort of married life, none has set greater store by a strong, doughty knighthood. The ideal of Parzival's life he expresses in the words[69]: "des lîbes prîs unt doch der sêle pardîs bejagen mit schilt und ouch mit sper" (the body's prize and the soul's paradise conquer with shield and with spear); and when the old hermit absolves Parzival from his sins, Wolfram adds, with evident gratification, that he at the same time gave him good chivalrous advice.[70] In no poem of the Middle Ages does chivalry appear so complete and so truly human as in the *Parzival.*

His humanity.

It is hard to understand fully the mental attitude of Gottfried von Strassburg. On the one hand he shows himself thoroughly imbued with the spirit of polite society. Courtly manners are to him a most essential part of ethics. He delights in the description of brilliant fashionable events; he even gives at times direct advice in the liberal art of etiquette; nothing seems to him more to the credit of his hero Tristan than that he knows how to quarter a deer in blamelessly correct fashion.[71] On the other hand, he has no heart for the ideal tasks of chivalry; of Wolfram's enthusiasm for spiritual knighthood he has not a spark; the sacred rites of the church are hollow forms to him; he does not shrink from representing a judicial ordeal as mockery.[72] He seems to have been one of those finely organized natures who see the essential inanity of all things and yet delight in the beauty of their outward aspects; a doubtful character, without respect or reverence, but a true artist, with the most delicate sense of form and a caressing sympathy for human frailties and passions.

Gottfried's Tristan.

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[69] *Parzival* ed. Bartsch IX, 1171 ff. A similar ideal is represented in Wolfram's *Willehalm.* Cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, 279.

[70] *Ib.* IX, 2057 f. For Wolfram's relation to Chrestien and Kyot cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, p. 278 f.

[71] Cf. *Tristan* ed. R. Bechstein V, 2786 ff. [72] *Ib.* XXIV, 15737 ff.

His *Tristan* is the most exquisitely finished portrayal in mediæval literature of the human soul swayed by emotions. Never has the irresistible power of love been represented in a more enchanting, bewildering, intoxicating manner than in this poem.[73]

Tristan has been sent by his uncle Marke, king of Kurnewal, to sue in his name for the hand of Isolt, daughter of the king of Ireland. Isolt follows him grudgingly. She entertains a twofold spite against him: for he is the slayer of Morolt, her uncle; and now he has come to take her away from her home to a foreign country and to an unknown husband. On board the ship which carries them to Kurnewal she keeps aloof from him, and when he approaches her she receives him with bitter words. As for Tristan, he feels towards Isolt nothing more than the respect due to a beautiful woman, who is moreover the betrothed of his master. Through an accident, however, they both drink of a magic love-potion, and now their hearts and minds are completely changed.[74]

" When the maiden and the man, Isolt and Tristan, had taken the potion, forthwith there appeared the world's unrest, Love, the huntress of hearts, and stole upon their souls. Before they were aware of it, she waved her banner over them and drew them both into her power. One and united they became who had been two and divided. Isolt's hatred was gone. Love, the peacemaker, had cleansed and smoothed both their hearts so that each to the other seemed as clear as a mirror. They had only one heart: Isolt's grief was Tristan's pain, Tristan's pain was Isolt's grief; they were one in joy and in sorrow. And yet they hid it from each other. It was doubt and shame that made them do so. She felt ashamed, and so did he; she

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[73] Cf. K. Bartsch, *Tristan u. Isolde*, in *Vortr. u. Aufs. p.* 132 ff. For the relation of Gottfried to his French predecessor " Thomas von Britanje " (*Trist. v.* 150) cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, 284 f.—The first German poet to treat the Tristan saga was Eilhart von Oberge (c. 1170). Gottfried's *Tristan*, which was left unfinished, was brought to a close by Ulrich von Türheim (c. 1240) and Heinrich von Freiberg (c. 1300).

[74] *Tristan* ed. Bechstein XVI, 1171 ff

doubted him, he doubted her. Though blindly their hearts' desire drew them towards one goal, yet they both dreaded the first step. When Tristan felt the touch of Love, he said to himself: 'No, Tristan, turn away, recollect yourself, put it out of your mind.' He battled against his will, he desired against his desire, he wished to flee and was arrested. He turned to Honour and Faith for help, but at once Love attacked him and brought him back to her. Honour and Faith pressed upon him, but Love pressed still harder. Often, as prisoners are wont to do, did he think of escape. 'Look after others,' he said to himself, 'let your desire wander and love who may be loved.' But the snare held him fast, and when he probed his heart to find a change in it, he found in it Love and Isolt. Even so it fared with Isolt. She, also, struggled like a bird in the lime, she felt her senses sink, she tried to lift herself up, but she was held back and drawn downward. She turned hither and thither, with hands and feet she strove, but all the more her hands and feet sank into the blind sweetness of Love and Tristan. Shame turned her eyes away from him, but Love drew her heart back to him. Shame and maiden battled against Love and man. But as it is said that Shame and maiden do not live long, so here also they soon surrendered; and Isolt, yielding to Love, let her glances and her heart rest upon Tristan."

From this time on they both seem to have lost all moral responsibility. They are driven about like wrecks on the sea of passion, they trespass all human and divine law. Even before they reach Kurnewal they have sinned, and when Isolt becomes Marke's wife she has already broken her plight. Hardly an attempt is made at hushing the matter. Even at Marke's court Tristan and Isolt find constant opportunity to see each other and to continue their criminal relation. Marke constantly suspects, and is constantly deceived; and the poet, although seeming to disapprove of the immorality of all this, at heart evidently delights in the ever-new tricks and devices which the lovers find for gratifying their fatal desire. At last Tristan is exiled. He enters upon a new life of adventure and struggle; he again falls victim to his passion by losing his heart to another Isolt who reminds him of his first love. A new conflict arises in his soul: his old and his new love

struggle with each other; self-reproach and gloomy forebodings take hold of him.—Here the poem breaks off. But we may assume that it was the intention of the poet to let the hero die in the midst of his moral agonies, his feelings exhausted, his heart broken.

In Gottfried von Strassburg we see the dissolution of chivalric society. Passion overleaps all the barriers of social custom and moral law. An elemental instinct breaks down the rules of tradition and accepted respectability. As in the poetry of the Migration period, the individual appears again as its own centre, its own guiding star, its own ruin. The ideals of mediæval life have lost their meaning.[75]

We shall see, in the chapter following, the growth of a new life, the appearance of a new social spirit: the rise of the middle classes, and the first advancing steps of modern Democracy.

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[75] Cf. for the whole subject of this chapter, K. Lamprecht *l.c.* III, 204–253.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

(From the Middle of the Thirteenth to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century.)

The middle of the thirteenth century marks the transition from mediæval to modern life.

The two great institutions which had controlled European society ever since the time of Charles the Great, empire and papacy, were now showing unmistakable signs of decay. The downfall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty (1268) put an end to German predominance in Europe. The imperial dignity, divested of national import, became a mere party name and a pretext for sectional aspirations. Nothing is more significant of the utter dissolution of national unity in Germany during the following centuries than that in 1347, at a time when Paris and London had for generations been the acknowledged centres of French and English political life, the seat of the German government was transferred for more than fifty years to Prague, the capital of a territory un-German in population and until then hardly connected with the political system of the German empire. During the whole period from Rudolf von Habsburg (d. 1291) to Maximilian I. (d. 1519) there appeared not a single ruler who succeeded in enforcing the most ordinary right and performing the most ordinary duty of government: the levying of taxes and the maintenance of public order.

Decline of empire and papacy.

Less apparent, but all the more significant, were the symptoms of decay threatening the very root of the ecclesi-

astical system of the time. Never, to be sure, was the outward condition of the church more flourishing than in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Never did monasticism exert such an omnipresent influence upon all classes of the people as in the period following the foundation of the Franciscan and Dominican orders (beginning of the thirteenth century). Never was the Christian doctrine expounded and defended by more learned or zealous men than the great scholastic writers of the thirteenth century: Albert of Cologne (d. 1280), Thomas of Aquino (d. 1274), Duns Scotus (d. 1308). Never did Christian art bring forth more perfect embodiments of Christian ideals than the wonderful cathedrals which during the same century rose in Amiens, Cologne, and Canterbury.

But all this outward splendour and activity could not cover up the fact that the most advanced minds of the age, at any rate, were beginning to fall away from a religious system which regarded the pope as not only the infallible interpreter of eternal truth, but also the keeper of supreme temporal power. In Italy, Dante, the forerunner of Humanism, raised the cry of indignant protest against the degradation of divine offices to human ends,[1] upholding at the same time the divine origin and essential independence of the temporal state.[2] In France king Philip the Fair called up his people against the attempts of the pope to interfere with the internal affairs of the nation, and public opinion rallied solidly around the standard of the crown. In Germany the violent struggle between church and state during the reign of Ludwig of Bavaria led (in 1338) to a solemn declaration by the assembled princes that the election by the princes, not the papal consecration, was the source of imperial power. In England the

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[1] Cf., *e.g.*, *Inferno* XIX, 115.

[2] This is the central thought of his treatise *De monarchia* ; cf. especially III, 13-15 ed. Witte.

bold accusations of Wycliffe (1324–84) against Romish corruption and usurpation were re-echoed at least among the learned, and were upheld by Parliament. And not long after, the spirit of revolt against mediæval hierarchy found its first great martyr and hero in Johannes Hus (d. 1415).

While thus the main supports of mediæval life were gradually crumbling away, there arose at the same time two forces destined to become the chief instruments of a new civilization: the sovereign power of the territorial princes and the communal independence of the cities. Paradoxical as it may seem, both these forces combined to prepare the way for modern democracy, the princes by levelling down, the cities by levelling up; the former by forcing their subjects into equality, the latter by opening their gates to liberty, both by introducing a new social factor: the middle classes.

The new political powers.

It was the territorial princes who broke up the feudal state. Their claims of sovereignty did not, like those of the emperor, rest upon a personal relation of allegiance, but upon the hereditary transmission of a public office. And the history of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries is a record of one continuous and finally successful effort on the part of the princes to assert the supreme power of such office against the conflicting interests of all classes, the clergy and the nobility as well as the bourgeoisie. Many time-honoured rights were crushed in this struggle, many well-founded privileges were trampled into the ground; and yet it is impossible not to see that without this demolition of mediæval institutions and class distinctions the structure of the modern state could not have been established. And it ought not to be forgotten that it was the princes who during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries founded most of the universities which to-day are the pride of Germany; that it was they who in the sixteenth century saved the

The territorial princes.

religious Reformation from being smothered in party hatred and fanaticism.

The free cities.

The whole history of the German cities from the tenth to the fifteenth century is a succession of stages of emancipation. From settlements of artisans employed by the bishop and living around the bishop's castle, they had in course of time changed into independent communities of free citizens, making and executing their own laws, electing their own magistrates, ranking with the princes and barons as one of the great estates of the empire, upholding the honour of the common fatherland at home and abroad at a time when the central government had become decrepit and powerless. An animated description from the pen of the Italian cardinal Enea Silvio, who visited Germany in 1458, gives us a picture of the material prosperity of the German cities in the fifteenth century. "We say frankly," he declares,[3] "never has Germany been richer, never more resplendent than to-day. Nothing more magnificent or beautiful can be found in all Europe than Cologne with its wonderful churches, city halls, towers and palaces, its stately burghers, its noble stream, its fertile cornfields." And equally beautiful are Mainz, Worms, Speier, Basel, Bern. "Some of the houses of Strassburg citizens are so proud and costly that no king would disdain to live in them. Certainly the kings of Scotland would be glad if they were housed as well as the moderately well-to-do burghers of Nürnberg. Augsburg is not surpassed in riches by any city in the world; Vienna has some palaces and churches which even Italy may envy." It would be hard to overrate the social importance of this outward prosperity of the German cities in the later Middle Ages, spreading as it did over a large geographical area, and affording comfort

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[3] Aeneas Sylvius *De ritu, situ, moribus et conditione Germaniae*, Opera ed. Hopperus, Basileae 1571, *p.* 1052–55. Cf. H. Janitschek, *Geschichte d. deutschen Malerei p.* 225.

to a class of people who during the height of chivalrous culture were still confined to the hard struggle for bare existence. But even more important than this prosperity itself is the fact that it was the fruit of a long-sustained fight for independence. It seems like an embodiment of the very spirit of this fight when Eike von Repgow in his *Sachsenspiegel* (1230) says[4]: "Servitude is against God's will. It has its origin in constraint, imprisonment, and illegitimate force, which in times of old were introduced by usurpation, and which now are held up to us as right." The very consciousness of having fought for their existence gave to the German cities that character of intellectual sturdiness and fearlessness which made them the principal seats of the Mystic movement, which opened their gates to Humanism, which rendered them the firmest allies of Luther.

The new literature.

The literature which corresponds to this changed state of affairs is at first sight somewhat disappointing, and seems to offer little to attract the attention of the student of literary history. The heroic grandeur of the national epics, the aristocratic noblesse of the Minnesong, the dignity and grace of the court romances, are now things of the past. Their place is taken by productions which reveal depth rather than beauty, truthfulness rather than wealth of imagination, common-sense rather than genius. One generation at the point of transition from the twelfth to the thirteenth century had produced Hartmann, Wolfram, Gottfried, Walther von der Vogelweide, the singers of the *Nibelungenlied* and of *Gudrun;* now there follow three centuries without a poet whose name is counted among the great names of history.

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[4] *Sachsenspiegel* ed. Homeyer, *Landr.* III, 42. The same spirit of civic independence permeates the city chronicles of the time, such as those of Strassburg by Fritsche Closener (1362) and Jacob Twinger von Königshofen (1415), Konrad Justinger's *Chronik von Bern* (1420).—Cf. for this whole subject K. Lamprecht *l.c.* IV, 211–303.

And yet these same centuries, far from being a waste in the development of German civilization, belong to the most fruitful epochs which the history of the German mind has ever seen. If they have given us no Wolfram, they prepared the way for a Dürer; if they produced no *Nibelungenlied*, they brought forth a prose literature of marvellous wealth and power. If they fell behind the time of the crusades in explosive enthusiasm and chivalrous devotion, they brought to life a principle without which there would have been no Luther, no Lessing, no Kant, no Goethe, in short no modern life: the principle of individualism.

Individualism.

It would of course be a mistake to attach to the word individualism, when applied to the fourteenth century, the same fulness of meaning which it has for us of the present day. No mediæval man ever thought of himself as a perfectly independent being founded only on himself, or without a most direct and definite relation to some larger organism, be it empire, church, city, or guild. No mediæval man ever seriously doubted that the institutions within which he lived were divinely established ordinances, far superior and quite inaccessible to his own individual reason and judgment. No mediæval man would ever have admitted that he conceived nature to be other than the creation of an extramundane God, destined to glorify its creator and to please the eye of man. It was reserved for the eighteenth century to draw the last consequences of individualism; to see in man, in each individual man, an independent and complete entity; to derive the origin of state, church, and society from the spontaneous action of these independent individuals; and to consider nature as a system of forces sufficient unto themselves. When we speak of individualism in the declining centuries of the Middle Ages, we mean by it that these centuries initiated the movement which the eighteenth century brought to a climax. Now, for the first time since the decay of classic literature,

people at large began to give way to emotional introspection; now for the first time they dared to throw off the disguises of rank and station and lay bare the human heart which is hidden under it all. Now for the first time popular criticism lifted its head and attacked, if not the existing order of things itself, at least its evils and abuses. And now for the first time men were seized by a common impulse to reproduce the reality of nature in its thousandfold manifestations, and to enter into the mysterious affinity of its life with ours.

It cannot be denied that the first traces of this movement are to be seen in the very climax of the preceding literary epoch. The *Nibelungenlied* abounds in scenes of wonderful realistic power. Hartmann, Wolfram, Gottfried, although they give a consummate expression to the ideals of chivalry, at the same time demonstrate, each in his own way, the superiority of human feeling over social conventions. Walther is quite as unrestrained in revealing his own personal emotions as he is bold in his attacks against the church and the princes. And one need only to think of the humane refinement preached in the *Welscher Gast* by Thomasin von Zirclaria (1216), of Freidank's passionate declamations against Romish corruption (about 1230), of the graphic descriptions of peasant life by Neidhart von Reuenthal (d. about 1240), of the moral enthusiasm revealed in the poetry of Reinmar von Zweter (d. about 1250), of the sympathetic view of burgherdom taken in *The Good Gerhard* by Rudolf von Ems (d. 1254), of the intense spirituality displayed in *The World's Reward* or *The Golden Forge* by Konrad von Würzburg (d. 1287), of the delicacy of sentiment pervading the love-songs of a Hadlaub (about 1300) or Frauenlob (d. 1318), to realize that even in the thirteenth century the ideals of chivalry had by no means ceased to be living forces in the widening and deepening of human culture. And yet there can be no doubt that it was the material and intellectual awakening of the middle

classes and the liberalizing influence of city life which first made room for the full development of the modern spirit: the spirit of subjectivism, of criticism, of sympathy with life in all its forms and phases.

The first remarkable manifestation of this new spirit is to be found in the greater freedom of religious oratory brought about through the activity of the two great preaching orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Previous to the establishment of these orders the traditional preaching service was confined within certain clearly marked limitations. There were sermons, as a rule, only on Sundays and holy-days, only within a church or chapel, only by the regularly appointed parson or his superiors; and most of the sermons were of a decidedly conventional and stereotyped character.[5] From all these limitations the new preaching orders were exempt. They were endowed with a special papal privilege to dispense the word of God in *all* dioceses, and the bishops were not slow to impress upon their subordinates the duty of receiving these preaching friars readily and willingly. The Franciscan preacher, then, would go about from town to town, he would speak on whatever text he might choose, on any day, in any place, in the public square, before the city gates, from steeples, from trees[6]; and it is easy to see how this freedom of movement would tend to widen the range of his thought, to bring him into closer touch with the world, to impart to his speech a fuller grasp of life.

The preaching orders.

The typical representative of this new method of sermonizing is Berthold of Regensburg (d. 1272), the greatest orator of the thirteenth century. No mediæval preacher, if we except Bernhard of Clairvaux,

Berthold of Regensburg.

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[5] Cf. R. Cruel, *Gesch. d. deutschen Predigt im MA. p.* 48 f. 78. 279 f. It would be a mistake to assume that there existed in the Middle Ages a universally recognised obligation for every parson to preach on every Sunday. *Ib. p.* 208 ff.

[6] Cf. W. Wackernagel, *Altdeutsche Predigten u. Gebete p.* 362.

seems to have drawn audiences equal to his in size and enthusiasm.[7] The manuscript of one of his sermons contains the marginal note: "Many thousands listened to it at Zürich before the gate;" and in other manuscripts audiences of forty, sixty, a hundred, nay two hundred, thousand people are recorded—statements which, even though they are palpable exaggerations, show the extraordinary influence exerted by this man. Not a few fancied they saw a halo around his head while he was speaking; and many a proud knight would return stolen church property, many a frivolous courtesan would abjure the lusts of the world, touched by his speech. Once, when his thundering words have terrified one of his hearers, a poor daughter of sin, to such a degree that she breaks down, he calls out to the assembled populace: "Who of you will take this repentant daughter for a wife? I will endow her with a marriage-portion." A man steps forward to accept the offer. Berthold promises ten pounds, and sends some men through the crowd to collect the sum. While the collection is being taken, he suddenly exclaims: "Enough! we have the money that is needed." And lo! exactly ten pounds, not a penny less or more, had been collected.

A true man of the people, Berthold knew how to appeal to the instincts of the common man, how to enliven his oratory with allusions to every-day occurrences, how to illustrate even the supernatural by graphic and striking imagery. Here is how, in one of his sermons, he depicts the glory of God[8]: "No mother ever was so fond of her child that, if she were to look at it for three days without intermission, she would not on the fourth prefer eating a piece of bread. But if you should say to a man who is with God: 'Thou hast ten children on earth, and for every one of them thou shalt obtain honour and riches as long

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[7] For the following cf. Wackernagel *l. c. p.* 354 ff.

[8] Berthold von Regensburg ed. Pfeiffer and Strobl, I, 388 ff.

as they live if thou wilt only turn thy eyes from God as long as it takes me to turn my hand,'—that man would rather let his children go a-begging than turn his face from God this single moment. Of the glory of God we can speak only in images. For all that we could ever say about it, that is just as though the unborn babe in its mother's womb were to tell of all the beauty and glory of the world, of the shining sun, of the shining stars, of the power and manifold colours of precious metals, of the power and perfume of noble spices, of the beautiful things made of silk and gold, of all the sweet voices of the world, of the song of birds and the sound of harps, and of the variegated colours of the flowers. As little as the babe in the mother's womb which never saw either good or bad and never felt a single joy, could talk of this,—so little can we talk of the unspeakable delight which is in heaven, or of the beauteous face of the living God."

In all this we see an intensity of the inner life, a passionate glow of individual feeling, which it is hard to imagine in permanent accord with the fixed forms of an accepted creed; and if men like Berthold and his teacher, David of Augsburg,[9] with all their wealth of original thought, remained most zealous supporters of outward churchliness, they were soon followed by men whom the contrast between individual inspiration and traditional dogma was to lead to a more or less open opposition against the whole hierarchical system: the classics of German Mysticism in the fourteenth century.

The Mystics.

Each of the three great mystic preachers of the fourteenth century seems to have been affected by popular movements on which the church had laid the opprobrium of unsound and dangerous doctrine. One of the chief accusations raised against Master Eckhart

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[9] Cf. F. Pfeiffer, *Deutsche Mystiker des* 14. *Jahrhdts* I, 309 ff.; and *Ztschr. f. d. Altert.* IX, 1 ff.

(d. 1327) by the papal inquisition was that he had abetted the heresies of the Beghards and the "Brethren of the Free Spirit."[10] Heinrich Suso (d. 1366) was censured by the authorities of his order for having defended Eckhart against this indictment.[11] And Johannes Tauler (d. 1361), devout believer that he was in the ecclesiastical means of grace, expressed his sympathy with the principle of universal priesthood which in the contemporary movement of the "Friends of God" found such a large popular following, in the memorable words[12]: "Not the churches make the people holy, but the people make the churches holy."

Eckhart.

In originality of thought and boldness of speculation Eckhart unquestionably was the greatest of these men; nay, it is not too much to say that he was one of those rare prophetic spirits who anticipate by whole centuries the development of mankind. There can be no doubt that Eckhart himself would indignantly have refused to be classed with modern pantheists. In all his teachings we see the earnest desire to reconcile his own thought with the doctrine of the church. And yet how utterly impossible it is to reconcile with orthodox theology such sayings as these[13]: "In the moment that God was, the world was created. God created the world and I with him. Before the creatures were, God was not God. God is all things; all things are God. The Father begets me, his son, without cessation; I say more: he begets in me himself and in himself me. The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one eye." How nearly related to the Hegelian system is his conception of the world as a continual emanation of divinity, a continual transition of the Godhead from

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[10] Cf. W. Preger, *Gesch. d. deutschen Mystik* I, 349 ff.

[11] *Ib.* II, 359.

[12] Cf. Denifle, *Taulers Bekehrung p.* 80, *Quellen u. Forschungen* XXXVI.

[13] Cf. Pfeiffer, *Mystiker* II, 579. 581. 281. 282. 311. 205. 312.

Naught to Aught, from the potential to the actual, from the formless one to the multiform many! How nearly akin to the views of the aged Goethe about the perfect personality is his dream of the union of the human soul with the Godhead—a union so complete and absolute that the soul is utterly absorbed in it, "as the morning red is absorbed in the sunlight"![14] And have we not an almost literal anticipation of Schiller's definition of a "beautiful soul" in Eckhart's definition of highest spirituality? "The highest," he says,[15] "which the spirit may attain in this mortal clay is this: to live in such a manner that virtue is no longer an effort, i.e. that all virtues have become so natural to the soul, that it not only practises virtue purposely, but makes all virtues shine forth from itself unconsciously even as though it were virtue itself."

Suso.

Heinrich Suso has been called the Ulrich von Lichtenstein of Mysticism. And, indeed, there is a certain resemblance between the worldly knight of the thirteenth century, who devoted a whole life of fantastic adventure to the hopeless task of winning the heart of his chosen lady, and this Dominican monk of the fourteenth century, who sighs and pines and mortifies himself for the sake of that most fair of all fair maidens: eternal wisdom. Ulrich von Lichtenstein was beside himself with delight when he was allowed to take a sip of the water in which his lady love had washed her hands; Suso cannot eat an apple without losing himself in sentimental reflections on divine subjects: three of the pieces he eats in honour of the Trinity, the fourth he offers to the blessed Virgin, "that she might give it to her dear little child."[16] Ulrich cut off his finger and sent it to his mistress as a token of his allegiance; Suso inflicts upon himself

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[14] Pfeiffer *l. c.* 491. [15] Cf. *Ztschr. f. histor. Theol.* 1864, *p.* 169.

[16] Cf. F. Vetter, *Ein Mystikerpaar d.* 14. *Jahrhdts p.* 31 f. J. Bächtold, *Gesch. d. deutschen Litt. in d. Schweiz p.* 215 ff.

day in and day out the most extraordinary chastisements and tortures. He chains himself, he lies on a cross attached to his back and covered with pointed iron nails, he suffers himself to be eaten up with vermin, for more than twenty years he refrains from washing himself.[17] But with all this, what a difference between the Quixotic knight and the Quixotic monk! In the former nothing but an empty play of fancy; a life regulated by the shallow dictates of courtly etiquette; feelings utterly conventional and impersonal. In the latter the ardent aspirations of a man craving for harmony with the universe; a soul thirsting after righteousness and truth; through all the aberrations of a morbid imagination, an incessant striving for individual perfection. In the former the senile efforts of an age which has become a caricature of itself; in the latter the juvenile stammerings of an age which has not yet become master of itself. The former points to the past; the latter points to the future. The woes and joys of Ulrich von Lichtenstein do not move the hearts of modern men; they have become matters of mere curiosity. But what modern man would not feel something akin to his own being in the Rousseau-like rhapsody into which Suso's soul breaks forth as he sings the *Sursum corda*, the prelude of the silent mass?[18]

"I set before my inner eyes myself in all my being, with body, soul, and all my faculties, and placed around myself all creatures which God ever created, in heaven, on earth, and in all the elements, the birds of the air, the beasts of the forests, the fishes of the water, the leaves and the grass of the land, and the countless sand of the sea, and thereto all the little dust-flakes which shine in the rays of the sun, and all the little water-drops which ever fell or fall from dew, snow, or rain,—and wished that each of all these things had a sweetly swelling sound of harps, well prepared from the innermost essence of my heart, so that there would rise up from them a new jubilant hymn of praise to the beloved, gentle God from evermore to evermore.

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[17] Cf. Preger *l. c.* II, 350 f.

[18] Cf. F. Vetter, *Lehrhafte Litteratur d.* 14. *u.* 15. *Jahrhdts, DNL.* XII, 2, *p.* 210 f.

And then the longing arms of my soul spread out toward the countless beings of all creation, exhorting and inciting them even as a zealous precentor incites his fellow-singers to sing joyfully and to offer up their hearts to God : *Sursum corda.*"

Tauler.

In Tauler, finally, Mysticism attained to its sanest and most humane form. Tauler seems to anticipate the great religious painters of the fifteenth century, a Stephen Lochner, a Hubert or Jan van Eyck, a Rogier van der Weyde or Memlinc. He is an enemy of fanatic asceticism; he believes in the divineness of natural inclinations.[19] "Nature is in itself good and noble, why should I then hew away aught that belongs to it? For I tell thee that when the time is come for it to yield fruit in a godly, blessed, devout life, then it will be seen that thou hast spoiled thy nature." He does not share the monkish contempt for secular pursuits and callings; he has sympathy with all walks of human life, because he knows it is all from God.[20] "One can spin, another can make shoes, and some have great aptness for all sorts of outward acts, so that they can earn a great deal, while others are altogether without this quickness. These are all gifts proceeding from the spirit of God. If I were not a priest, but were living as a layman, I should take it as a great favour that I knew how to make shoes, and should try to make them better than any one else, and would gladly earn my bread by the labour of my hands." He contrasts an empty, formal churchliness with the fulness and sanctity of the inner life[21]: "Behold, dear friend, if thou shouldst spend all thy years in running from church to church, thou must look for

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[19] Tauler's *Sermons* trsl. by S. Winkworth *p.* 249.—That the *Historie des erwirdigen Docters Johannis Thauleri*, which is appended to all editions of Tauler's sermons since 1498 and also to this English translation, is a fiction by Tauler's contemporary, the Strassburg "Gottesfreund" Rulman Merswin, has been demonstrated by Denifle in the treatise mentioned above.

[20] *Ib.* 354. [21] *Ib.* 364.

and receive help from within, or thou wilt never come to any good; however thou mayest seek and inquire, thou must also be willing to be tormented without succour from the outward help of any creature. I tell you, children, that the very holiest man I ever saw in outward conduct and inward life had never heard more than five sermons in all his days. Let the common people run about and hear all they can, that they may not fall into despair or unbelief; but know that all who would be God's inwardly and outwardly turn to themselves and retire within." He contrasts the prayer of the soul with the prayer of the lips[22]: "Outward prayer is of no profit except in so far as it stirs the noble flame of devotion in the heart, and when that sweet incense breaks forth and rises up, then it matters little whether the prayer of the lips be uttered or not." He is fond of enlivening his speech by pictures of outdoor life, as for instance when he compares those Christians who have not yet come to know God truly with untrained dogs who have not yet acquired the true scent of the game[23]: "They run with all speed after the good dogs of nobler breed. And verily, if they kept on running, they would with them bring down the stag. But no, in the space of a short hour or so they look about them, and lose sight of their companions, or they stand still with their nose in the earth and let the others get ahead of them, and so they are left behind."

But his whole soul flames up when he depicts in heavenly colours the beauty of the true spiritual life. So when he likens it to a wilderness [24] in which

"there spring up and flourish many sweet flowers where they are not trodden under foot by man. In this wilderness are found the lilies of chastity, and the white roses of innocence; and therein are found too the red roses of sacrifice, when flesh and blood are consumed in the struggle with sin, and the man is ready, if need be, to

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[22] Tauler's *Sermons* 217. [23] *Ib.* 321 f. [24] *Ib.* 198 f.

suffer martyrdom—the which is not easily to be learned in the world. In this wilderness, too, are found the violets of humility, and many other fair flowers and wholesome roots, in the examples of holy men of God. And in this wilderness shalt thou choose for thyself a pleasant spot wherein to dwell; that is, a holy life in which thou mayest follow the example of God's saints in pureness of heart, poverty of spirit, true obedience, and all other virtues; so that it may be said, as it is in the Canticles: 'Many flowers have appeared in our land'; for many have died full of holiness and good works."

So when he depicts God's sun shining upon the noble vine of the Christian heart and bringing forth all its precious fruit;[25] so, above all, when he describes the mystery of mysteries, the union of God and the soul.[26]

"When, through all manner of exercises, the outward man has been converted into the inward, reasonable man, and thus the two, that is to say, the powers of the senses and the powers of the reason, are gathered up into the very centre of the man's being,—the unseen depths of his spirit, wherein lies the image of God,—and thus he flings himself into the divine abyss in which he dwelt eternally before he was created; then, when God finds the man thus simply and nakedly turned towards him, the Godhead bends down and descends into the depths of the pure, waiting soul, and transforms the created soul, drawing it up into the uncreated essence, so that the spirit becomes one with him. Could such a man behold himself, he would see himself so noble that he would fancy himself God, and see himself a thousand times nobler than he is in himself, and would perceive all the thoughts and purposes, words and works, and have all the knowledge of all men that ever were.

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[25] Tauler's *Sermons* 251.

[26] *Ib.* 380.—In Tauler the religious oratory of Germany before Luther reached its culminating point. For Geiler of Kaisersberg, the greatest preacher of the fifteenth century (cf. Cruel *l. c. p.* 538 ff.), far from having developed the pure and elevated style of Tauler, rather represents a return to the drastic realism of Berthold of Regensburg. Nor can it be said that the religious thought of the fifteenth century added much to the religious thought of the fourteenth. Both the *Theologia deutsch* by the so-called Frankfurter and the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas of Kempen are in the main restatements of what the Mystics of the fourteenth century had said before.

In reading these effusions, is it not as though we were looking at one of those marvellous fifteenth-century paintings in Ghent or Bruges, Cologne or Lübeck, in which the most simple and serene worldliness, the intensest passion, the calmest contemplation, and the deepest spirituality have been blended into so chaste and harmonious a whole that all merely technical criticism is silenced before them?

Poetry.

The same vividness of representation, the same individuality and truthfulness of feeling, the same sympathy with real life which we observed to be characteristic features of the religious prose of the centuries preceding the birth of Protestantism, we observe, also, in the three most important branches of the poetic literature of this period, i.e., in the Volkslied, in didactic and satirical narrative, and in the religious drama.

The Volkslied.

If we compare the German Volkslied[27] of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries with the chivalric Minnesong, we cannot help being struck with the extraordinary advance made during these centuries in directness, force, and originality of poetic speech. Not in the laborious rhymes and metres of the Mastersingers,[28] but in the freedom and artlessness of the Volkslied, do we find the most characteristic lyrical expression of the heightening and widening of individual life which accompanied the growth of civic independence during these centuries.

No doubt there is a great deal of truth in the assertion which, since Herder's *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, has found its way into all literary histories, that the Volkslied is property and product of a whole nation. A song once started is taken up by the multitude[29]; it is sung by

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[27] An exhaustive bibliography of the Volkslied *GdgPh.* II, 1, 752 ff.

[28] Cf. Adam Puschmann, *Gründlicher Bericht des deutschen Meistergesangs*, in *NddLw. nr.* 73. *GG.* § 91.

[29] Cf. *Limburger Chronik* ed. A. Wyss, *p.* 56. 65. 70. 74. 75. *passim.*

so many different persons, in so many different ways, on so many different occasions, that in the course of time, through additions, omissions, and transformations, it loses its original character. It is moulded, as it were, by the stream of public imagination, as the pebbles in the brook are moulded and remoulded by the current of the water which carries them along. And yet it is equally certain that each Volkslied, in its original form, is property and product of an individual poet, and is the result of individual and personal experiences. If this were not self-evident, the German folk-songs of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries would give ample proof of it. Although largely anonymous, these songs are emphatically personal. In many cases the very headline indicates the subjective character of the poem by introducing an *Ich*, *Du*, *Wir*, or *Ihr:* "Ich hort ein sichellin rauschen"—"Ich weiss ein fein brauns megdelin"—"Ich stund an einem morgen"—"Ich ritt mit lust durch einen wald"—"Ei du feiner reuter, edler herre mein"—"Was wöllen wir aber haben an?"—"Wol uf, ir lieben gsellen!"—etc., etc. And not infrequently the author, if he does not openly give his name, hints at least at his occupation and station in life. This song, we hear, for instance, was sung by a student, another by a fisherman, another by a pilgrim, still others by a rider good at Augsburg, by a poor beggar, by a landsknecht free, by three maidens at Vienna. Or we hear a frank expression of the author's satisfaction with himself and his production[30]:

Wer ist der uns das liedlein sang
Auss freiem mut, ja mut?
Das tet eins reichen bauren son,
War gar ein junges blut.

At times there is coupled with this a reference to personal experiences, not at all connected with the subject of

[30] Uhland, *Alte hoch- u. niederdeutsche Volkslieder nr.* 23.

the song, but which the singer is anxious to have his hearers know[31]:

> Der uns diss neuwe liedlein sang
> Er hats gar wol gesungen,
> Er ist dreimal in Frankreich gewest
> Und allzeit wider kommen.

And now the subject-matter of these songs itself! There is hardly a side of human character, there is hardly a phase of human life, hardly an event in national history, which did not find expression in them. It is as though the circulation of the national body had been quickened and its sensibilities heightened, as though people were seeing with keener eyes and listening with more receptive ears, as though they were gathering the thousandfold impressions of the inner and outer world: of stars and clouds, of trees and brooks, of love and longing, of broken faith and heroic deeds,—and were then giving shape to these impressions in melody and song. An unpretentious and succinct form it is. There is nothing in the Volkslied of the majestic massiveness of the Pindaric ode, nor does it have the finely chiselled elegance of the troubadour *chanson*. It is direct, simple, almost laconic. But this brevity is fraught with a deep sense of the living forces in nature and man, and this simplicity and directness convey impressions all the more vivid and striking, since they surprise us in the same way as the naïve wisdom of a child surprises us. Sometimes a single touch, such as "Dort oben auf dem berge" or "Zwischen berg und tiefem tal," opens the view of a whole landscape, with rivers flowing, with castles on mountain-tops, and birds sporting in the air. A single picture reveals sometimes the kinship of all living beings, as for instance the image of the linden-tree which is mourning with the deserted maiden[32]:

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[31] Uhland *l. c. nr.* 99 A; cf. *nr.* 114. [32] *Ib. nr.* 27.

Es stet ein lind in disem tal,
Ach Gott, was tut sie da?
Sie will mir helfen trauren,
Dass ich kein bulen hab.

A single stanza sometimes gives us an epitome of a whole human life with all its joys, sorrows, and catastrophes. What can be more impressive than the abruptness and the seemingly fragmentary character of the story, told in two short stanzas, of the youth who loved the miller's daughter? She lives upon yonder hill where the mill is turning; and when he looks up to it from the valley, then his senses are bewildered, and it seems to him as though the ceaseless turning of the wheel was his own unending love [33]:

Dort hoch auf jenem berge
Da get ein mülerad,
Das malet nichts denn liebe
Die nacht biss an den tag.

This is the first scene; but without transition there follows another picture. The mill is destroyed, the lovers have been parted, and the poor fellow is wandering away into loneliness and misery:

Die müle ist zerbrochen,
Die liebe hat ein end,
So gsegen dich got, mein feines lieb!
Jez far ich ins ellend.

How artless and enchanting, how dreamy and yet how distinctly drawn, is the scene in the wheatfield, where the poet overhears amidst the sound of the sickles the voices of two reaping girls, the one bewailing the loss of her sweetheart, the other rejoicing in her own happiness of newly awakened love [34]:

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[33] Uhland *l. c. nr.* 33. [34] *Ib. nr.* 34 A.

Ich hort ein sichellin rauschen,
Wol rauschen durch das korn,
Ich hort ein feine magt klagen :
Sie het ır lieb verlorn.

'La rauschen, lieb, la rauschen !
Ich acht nit wie es ge ;
Ich hab mir ein bulen erworben
In feiel und grünen kle.'

'Hast du ein bulen erworben
In feiel und grünen kle,
So ste ich hie alleine,
Tut meinem herzen we.'

How could a tragic story be told more simply and more thrillingly than in the tale of the little boy who has been poisoned by his stepmother? He is coming back from his aunt's house, where the poison has been given to him; and the whole crime is revealed to us in seven short stanzas, consisting of questions and answers directed to and given by the boy, and ending with a terrible curse against the cruel mother[35]:

Kind, wo bist du hin gewesen?
Kind, sage dus mir !
'Nach meiner mutter schwester,
Wie we ist mir !'

Kind, was gaben sie dir zu essen ?
Kind, sage dus mir !
'Eine brüe mit pfeffer,
Wie we ist mir !'

Kind, was gaben sie dir zu trinken ?
Kind, sage dus mir !
'Ein glas mit rotem weine,
Wie we ist mir.'

Kind, was gaben sie den hunden ?
Kind, sage dus mir !
'Eine brüe mit pfeffer,
Wie we ist mir !'

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[35] Uhland *l.c. nr.* 120; cf. Child, *Engl. and Scott. Pop. Ballads* I, 153 ff.

Kind, was machten denn die hunde?
Kind, sage dus mir!
'Sie sturben zur selben stunde,
Wie we ist mir!

Kind, was soll dein vater haben?
Kind, sage dus mir!
'Einen stul in dem himmel,
Wie we ist mir!'

Kind, was soll deine mutter haben?
Kind, sage dus mir!
'Einen stul in der hölle,
Wie we ist mir!'

What a picture of honest domesticity and burgher respectability is given in the touching story of the German Hero and Leander,[36] the "two royal children who could not come together—the water was far too wide." And how rugged and whole-souled, on the other hand, the German yeomanry appear in the outcry of the Dithmarse freemen against the Duke of Holstein, because he dared to build a fortified castle within their boundaries. Their leader calls upon them to tear down the hateful structure[37]:

Tredet herto, gi stolten Ditmarschen!
Unsen kummer wille wi wreken.
Wat hendeken gebuwet haen,
Dat können wol hendeken tobreken.

And the people answer with a magnificent affirmation of their readiness to undertake all things or to sacrifice all things rather than to lose their independence:

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[36] Uhland *l.c. nr.* 91.

[37] Liliencron, *Die hist. Volksl. d. Deutschen* I, *nr.* 45; the event belongs to the year 1404. Cf. *ib. nr.* 32–34 (*Schlacht bei Sempach*), *nr.* 35 (*Schlacht bei Näfels*), II *nr.* 138–41 (*Schlacht bei Granson*), *nr.* 142–44 (*Schlacht bei Murten*), *nr.* 147 (*Vom ursprung der eidgnoschaft*). J. Bächtold, *Geschichte d. deutschen Litt. in d. Schweiz p.* 191 ff.

De Ditmarschen repen averlut:
'Dat lide wi nu und nummermere,
Wi willen darumme wagen hals und gut
Und willen dat gar ummekeren.

'Wi willen darumme wagen goet und bloet
Und willen dar alle umme sterven,
Er dat der Holsten er avermoet
So scholde unse schone lant vorderven.'

Didactic and narrative poetry.

If, then, in the Volkslied of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries we notice a very marked advance over the bulk of the Minnesong in originality of feeling and in fulness of life, we observe a similar progress in the didactic and narrative poetry of the time, as compared with the average court-epics of the preceding epoch. To say it in a word: here lie the roots of the modern realistic novel. Not that any sustained and successful attempt had been made at that time to portray human character as developed under the influence of everyday occurrences and ordinary experiences; for *Reinke de Vos*,[37b] although it certainly is a most amusing and masterly caricature of human society, still retains too much of the weirdness of animal nature to be termed a portrayal of human character. But if we thus have no work in this narrative poetry, which in its totality could be called a forerunner of the modern novel, we have, on the other hand, a superabundance of situations, of incidents, of characters scattered through this literature, which are drawn with the same predilection for the common and the lowly, the same antipathy to society conventions, the same observation of detail, the same attention to the apparently insignificant, which mark the realistic tendencies of our own time.

[37b] For the development of the animal epic from the *Ecbasis Captivi* and *Isengrimus* (*supra*, *p.* 47 ff.), through the French *Roman de Renart* and *Isengrînes Nôt* by Heinrich der Glîchesære (c. 1180), to the *Roman van den Vos Reinaerde* by the Flemish poet Willem (c. 1250), and thence to the Low German *Reinke* (1498), cf. *GdgPh.* II, 1, 262. 462 f.

One of the earliest works of this kind, *Der Pfaffe Amis*, a collection of tales, written about 1230 by an Austrian poet named Stricker, is noteworthy as an attempt to draw the character of a clerical swindler. Of the manner in which this design is carried out the following episode in the impostor's career may serve as an illustration.[38] Concealing his clerical character, he introduces himself to the prior of a monastery as a simple, unlearned business-man. Appointed manager of the worldly affairs of the monastery, he displays remarkable executive capacity and wins the favour and confidence of the prior. One day he announces that he has had a vision : an angel has appeared before him and summoned him to conduct mass. He is in great perplexity about it ; for how could he, an ignorant, uneducated layman, who has never looked into a book, read Latin ? The prior encourages him to try. They lock themselves up in the church. Amis (the name of the impostor) is put into priestly garments, he steps before the altar, and lo and behold, he sings the mass from beginning to end most fluently and impressively. The prior is amazed and overjoyed : he has discovered a saint ! He spreads his fame abroad ; from all parts of the country people flock to the monastery, bringing large offerings of silver and gold. One fine morning the saint is gone, and the silver and gold with him.

Der Pfaffe Amis.

About the same time, probably towards 1250, a Bavarian poet, Wernher "the Gardener," wrote the story of Meier Helmbrecht, a young farmer, who, despising the honest modesty of his father's home, embraces court life, associates with a robber knight, becomes a highwayman himself, and is finally hung by enraged peasants. The scene where, on one of his plundering expeditions, he revisits his home for the first time since he left it against

Meier Helmbrecht.

[38] Cf. *c.* 10, *Die Messe; Erzählungen u. Schwänke d. MA.* ed. Lambel *p.* 67 ff.

his father's warning and wishes, is a masterpiece of minute and terse characterization[39]:

"When Helmbrecht rode up to his father's house, all the inmates ran to the gate, and the servants called out, not 'Welcome, Helmbrecht'—that they did not dare to do—but: 'Our young lord, be graciously welcome.' He answered in the Saxon dialect: 'Susterkindeken, got late iuch immer saelic sin.' His sister ran up to him and embraced him, but he said to her, 'Gratia vester.' Last of all came the old folks rather slowly, and embraced him affectionately; but he said to his father in French, 'Deu sal,' and to his mother in Bohemian, 'Dobra ytra.' Father and mother looked at each other, and the mother said to her husband: 'My lord, our senses have been bewildered, it is not our child, it is a Bohemian.' The father cried out: 'It is a Frenchman, it is not my son, whom I commended to God.' And his sister Gotelint said: 'It is not your son, to me he spoke in Latin, it must be a monk.' And the servant said: 'What I heard of him made me think he came from Saxony or Brabant; he said *Susterkindekin*, he surely is a Saxon.' Then the old farmer said with direct simplicity: 'Is it you, my son, Helmbrecht? Honour your mother and me, say a word in German, and I myself will groom your horse, I, and not my servant.' 'Ey waz sakent ir, geburekin?' answered the son. 'Min parit sol dehein geburik man zware nimmer gripen an.' ('Eh, what are you talking of, peasant? My horse, forsooth, no peasant shall dare to touch.') The old man was grieved and frightened, but again said: 'Are you Helmbrecht, my son? Then will I roast you a chicken this very night. But if you are a stranger, a Bohemian, or a Wendish man, then I have no shelter for you. If you are a Saxon or a Brabanter you must look out yourself for a meal, from me you shall have nothing, even though the night lasted a whole year. If you are a lord I have no beer or wine for you, go and find it with the lords.' Meanwhile it had grown late, and the boy knew there was no shelter for him in the neighbourhood, so at last he said: 'Yes, I am he, I am Helmbrecht; once I was your son and servant.' 'Then tell me the names of my four oxen!' 'Ouwer, Raeme, Erge, Sunne; I have often cracked my whip over them, they are the best oxen in the world; will you now receive me?' And the father cried out: 'Door and gate, chamber and closet, all shall be open to you!'"

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[39] *Meier Helmbrecht v.* 697 ff.; *ib. p.* 163 ff.

Some fifty years after Wernher had drawn this tragic picture from Bavarian peasant life a Bamberg schoolmaster, Hugo of Trimberg, composed a vast didactic poem, entitled *Der Renner* (1300), in which he attempted to give a view of the universe as it presented itself to him from behind the windows of his cloistered study. And here again, in the midst of long-winded reflections about heaven and earth, about the nature of beast and man, about virtues and vices, we find descriptions of actual life so forcible, so wholesome and unaffected, that we may feel tempted to apply to this moralising poet what the *Limburg Chronicle* under the year 1380 says of Master Wilhelm of Köln, the first great German painter[40]: "He knew how to paint any man of whatever form as though he were alive."

Hugo of Trimberg.

The following parable[41] of the mule who tries to hide his plebeian origin shows the democratic spirit which pervades all of these scenes. When the lion had been elected king of the animals he commanded all the beasts, great and small, to come before him and tell him their names. With the rest the mule came to the gathering. Said the king: "Tell me, what is your name?" The mule answered: "Sire, do you know the horse of the knight who resides at Bacharach and is called Sir Toldnir? Believe me, that same horse is my uncle; that same horse and my mother fed from the same manger and were born of the same mother." The king waxed angry and said: "As yet, it is not known to me what was your father's name." The mule answered: "Sire, did your path ever lead you by the town of Brunswick? Sire, there stands a young colt well kept and groomed. He belongs to the lord of the land, and is my uncle, as I have heard from my mother." The king said:

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[40] *Limburger Chronik* ed. Wyss *p.* 75.

[41] Cf. F. Vetter, *Lehrhafte Litt. d.* 14. *u.* 15. *Jhdts*, *DNL.* XII, 1, *p.* 258 ff.

"However noble your uncles are, however noble your mother may be, as yet I do not know who you are yourself, unless you tell me who your father is." Then the mule was silent. But the fox, who stood near by, said: "Sire, do you know the donkey whom the baker owns at Wesel, out yonder towards the field? Know that selfsame donkey is his father. Himself he is called mule, and he is four times my superior in strength and size. But I should not care to exchange my state with his patched-up nobility. His father, of whom he did not wish to speak, is far more worthy than any of his uncles. For faithfulness and simplicity dwell in him, and he supports himself by honest toil and to no one does he any harm. Sire, I speak the truth." Said the king: "You are right."

Ulrich Boner.

About thirty years later than this poetic encyclopædia of Hugo's is the *Edelstein* of the Bernese friar Ulrich Boner (1330), a collection of parables and fables intended, as the title indicates, to serve as a talisman against the evils and errors of the world. To what lengths of realistic frankness—not to say coarseness—the fourteenth century would go in its protest against chivalric conventions is illustrated, among other parables of this collection, by the tale of the fever and the flea.[42] One day the fever met the flea. Both had had a terrible night, and told their woes to each other. The flea said: "I'm nearly dead of hunger. Last night I went to a convent hoping for a good supper. But how sadly was I mistaken. I jumped upon a high bed, beautifully upholstered and richly decked out. It was that of the abbess, a very fine lady. When in the evening she went to bed, she noticed me at once, and cried: 'Irmentraut, where are you? come! bring the candle, quick!' I skipped off before the girl came, and when the light was out again I went back to the same place as before. Again she called, again I skipped off. And so

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[42] Vetter *l. c. p.* 28 ff.

it went all night long, and now you see I am completely tired out. Would to God that I had better luck." The fever said: "Well, don't think that I fared much better. I went to a working-woman last night. When she noticed that I was shaking her, she sat down, brewed herself a strong broth and ate it, after which she poured a pailful of water down her throat. Then she went to work to wash a lot of linen that she had standing in a tub; and she kept it up nearly all night long. I never spent such an uncomfortable night. At early dawn she put the tub on her head and carried it off to a brook to rinse the washing. Then I had enough of her and ran away."—The two now agree to change places the next night. The fever visits the abbess, the flea goes to the washerwoman's, and both have a very satisfactory time of it. For the abbess has herself warmly covered up and treated to all sorts of delicacies, which of course makes the fever stay with her for weeks; and the washerwoman is so tired with her day's work that she immediately drops off and sleeps all night without even suspecting that anything is wrong.

Realism in fifteenth-century satire. Its historical significance.

In order to convince ourselves that the tendency to realistic portrayal of life which is manifested in these specimens of poetic narrative from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had by no means abated by the beginning of the sixteenth, we need only to glance at some of the representative works of the decades immediately preceding the religious Reformation, such as Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494), *Reinke de Vos* (1498), Thomas Murner's *Narrenbeschwörung* (1512) and *Gauchmatt* (Fools' Meadow, 1514), or the popular prose tale of *Till Eulenspiegel* (1515).[43] Here we find

[43] Cf., *e.g.*, *Narrensch.* (*DNL.* XVI) *c.* 62 "Von nachts hofieren"; *Reinke* ed. K. Schröder I, 9 (the grotesque description of the villagers); *Narrenbeschw.* (*DNL.* XVII, 1) *c.* 80 "Ein lutenschlaher im herzen hon"; *Eulensp.* (*DNL.* XXV) *c.* 68 "Wie Ulenspiegel einen buren umb ein grün leindisch thuch betrog."

the same spirit which we observed in *Meier Helmbrecht* or *Der Pfaffe Amis*, the same spirit which was to find its consummate artistic expression in the woodcuts and the sculptures of the sixteenth century, in works like Dürer's Life of Mary, Peter Vischer's Tomb of St. Sebald, or Holbein's Dance of Death: a spirit of naïve fearlessness and truthfulness; a childlike delight in direct and unconventional, and even coarse, utterance; a loving tenderness for the apparently small and common; and a grim hatred of all pretence and usurpation. And if we thus are led to consider the historic significance of this outburst of realism in the narrative poetry of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, we cannot fail to see in it a symptom of one of the most important movements in modern history; we cannot fail to see in it a symptom that the time had come when the peasant, the merchant, the artisan were ready to claim their share in public life alongside of the clergyman and the knight; we cannot fail to see in it a symptom that the tide of that great popular upheaval against class rule which reached its first high-water mark in the religious Reformation had set in. When the second climax of that great upheaval, the French Revolution, was approaching, it was heralded in France, England, and Germany by a literary revolt. Instead of the gallant shepherds and shepherdesses, instead of the polite cavaliers and high-minded kings, who in the seventeenth century were deemed the only suitable subjects for fiction and the drama, people now wanted to see men and women of their own flesh and blood; and Fielding, Diderot, and Lessing appeared as the regenerators of literature. Just so, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the old heroic and ideal figures of Siegfried, of Parzival, of Tristan, representatives of a bygone aristocratic past, had lost their force; what people wanted to see in literature was their own life, their own narrow, crowded streets, their own gabled houses and steepled cathedrals, their own sturdy and homely faces.

It is under this same aspect, it is primarily as a social phenomenon, that the development of the religious drama during these centuries interests us here. The beginnings of the religious drama go back to the early Middle Ages. They were connected with the chief festivals of the church, and had their basis in the dramatic elements of the church liturgy. Out of the Christmas ritual, the principal subjects of which were the events centring around the birth of the Saviour, there developed simple dramatic representations of such scenes as the Annunciation, the Song of the Angels, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi, the Flight into Egypt, the Slaughter of the Innocents.[44] The recital on Good Friday of the biblical account of Christ's passion and death gradually led to an impersonation of the principal characters that appear in it. The introduction into the Easter mass of brief choral anthems, suggesting the dialogue between the angel and the three Marys at the grave, naturally gave rise to a similar representation of the whole group of events connected with the Resurrection.[45] And to these three foremost plays on Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, other performances on other festivals in course of time were added.

The religious drama. Its beginnings.

During the height of chivalric culture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries these plays seem to have shared the ideal and solemn character which marked this whole period. They were written in Latin; they were performed within the churches and by members of the clergy; they were operatic rather than dramatic; they were confined to the sphere of thought and

Its character in the twelfth century.

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[44] Cf., *e.g.*, the so-called *Ordo Rachelis;* K. Weinhold, *Weihnachtsspiele u. -Lieder p.* 62 ff.—Bibliography of the religious drama *GdgPh.* II, 1, 397. A comprehensive account in W. Creizenach, *Gesch. d. neuern Dramas* I. Ten Brink, *Hist. of Engl. Lit.* II, 1, 234 ff.

[45] Cf. K. Lange, *Die lat. Osterfeiern p.* 22 ff.

fancy which had received the sanction of the temporal and spiritual authorities.

The ludus de Antichristo.

From a contemporary and ardent admirer of emperor Frederick Barbarossa we have a *Play of Antichrist* (c. 1180),[46] which in a most emphatic manner reveals the elevated and sombre tone of the early sacred drama. Two allegoric personages, Paganism and the Synagogue, open this play. Paganism extols the polytheistic view, which accords due reverence to all heavenly powers, while the Synagogue glorifies the one invisible God, and inveighs against the belief in the divinity of Christ. Then, as a third, the Church comes forward, in regal crown and armour, on her right hand Mercy with the olive branch, on her left Justice with balance and sword. Against those who are of another faith than hers she pronounces eternal damnation. She is followed on the right by the pope and clergy, on the left by the emperor and his hosts. The kings of the earth bring up the rear. The emperor now demands the submission of the kings. All accord it, except the king of France, who, however, is at last forced into obedience. Then the emperor starts for the Holy Land to deliver it from the hands of the pagans. He triumphs over the enemies of Christendom, and thereupon lays down his crown and sceptre in the house of the Lord. But now the hypocrites conspire against the Church. In their midst is Antichrist, wearing a coat of mail beneath his wings, and leading on his right hand Hypocrisy, on his left Heresy. In the very temple of Jerusalem his followers erect his throne; and the Church, conquered and humiliated, is driven to the Papal See. Antichrist sends ambassadors to demand the homage of the world, and all kings

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[46] Edited by Froning, *Das Drama des MA.* (*DNL.* XIV) I, 199 ff. Of a similarly elevated character are the two so-called Benediktbeuren Plays (Froning III, 875 ff. I, 278 ff.), the former a Christmas, the latter a Passion play ; and the Trier Easter play (*ib.* I, 46 ff.).

kneel before him, except the German emperor. But although the emperor conquers him in a pitched battle, Antichrist manages at last, through false miracles, to gain even the support of the Germans; he conquers Babylon and is received by the Jews as their Messiah; his earthly kingdom extends farther than any other realm. But now the prophets Elijah and Enoch appear and preach the glory of the Saviour. A new struggle between light and darkness begins, but immediately comes to an abrupt end. A sound is heard from above, Antichrist falls, his followers flee away in haste and consternation, while the Church sings a hallelujah and announces that the Lord is coming to sit in judgment over the world.

Different character of the later religious drama. Wiener Osterspiel.

If we now turn from this essentially allegorical drama, and, passing over nearly three hundred years, on an Easter Sunday in the second half of the fifteenth century, mingle with the populace of a free German town, assembled in the market-place to witness the representation of the Redeemer's resurrection, we shall see a very different spectacle.[47] The first person that appears on the stage—after the resurrection itself with its usual sequence, Christ's descent into hell and the delivery of the Fathers, has passed before our eyes—is a quack doctor and vender of medicines. He has just come from Paris, where he has bought a great supply of salves and tonics and domestic wares, the usefulness of which he is not slow to impress upon his audience. But his salesman has run away, and he wants another. Now a second personage of an equally doubtful character, by the name of Rubin, presents himself. Though still a young fellow, he is an expert in all sorts of tricks. He is a pickpocket, a gambler, a counterfeiter, and he has always managed to defy the courts, except in Bavaria, where they caught him once and branded his cheeks. To the doctor

[47] Cf. Hoffmann, *Fundgruben* II, 313 ff.

he seems the right man, and he is engaged accordingly, the salary being fixed at a pound of mushrooms and a soft cheese. And since the streets are now beginning to be filled with a concourse of people, the two proceed at once to set up their booth. At this moment there arises from amidst the crowd a wailing song,—the three Marys are lamenting the death of Christ:

> Wir haben verlorn Jesum Christ,
> Der aller werlde ein troster ist,
> Marien son den reinen:
> Darum müsse wir beweinen
> Swerlichen seinen tot:
> Wenn er half uns aus grosser not—

which is followed by the exhortation to go to his grave and anoint his body with ointment. The quack sees his chance for a good bargain; he sends Rubin to coax the women to his booth, and now there ensues a regular country fair scene. The three Marys evidently do not know the value of money; they offer to pay all they have, three gold florins; and the merchant is so overcome by this unexpected readiness of his customers that he in turn gives them better stuff than he is accustomed to do. But here his wife, who, it seems, has a better business head, intervenes. She has made the ointment herself, she knows it ought to sell for much more, she bids the women not to touch it, and when her husband insists on keeping his agreement, she abuses him as a drunkard and spendthrift,—an attack which he answers by beating and kicking her. Finally they pack all their things together and move off, and again the farcical suddenly gives way to the pathetic. The three women arrive at the grave; but the stone has been rolled away, and the angel accosts them singing:

> Er ist nicht hie den ir sucht;
> Sunder get, ob irs gerucht,
> Und saget seinen jungern
> Und Petro besunder

Dass er ist erstanden
Und gein Galilea gegangen.

The scene closes with a chant of the three Marys, which is partly an expression of grief and sorrow that even the body of the Saviour should have been taken away from them:—

Owe der mere !
Owe der jemmerlichen klage !
Das grap ist lere :
Owe meiner tage !—

and partly an assertion of hope and confidence in the support of their Redeemer:

Jesu, du bist der milde trost
Der uns von sunden hat erlost,
Von sunden und von sorgen
Den abent und den morgen.
Er hat dem teufel angesiget,
Der noch vil feste gebunden liget.
Er hat vil manche sele erlost :
O Jesu, du bist der werlde trost.

The whole religious drama of the fifteenth century is crowded with scenes similar to these. Most pathetic and soul-stirring are the lamentations of Mary before the cross, as they are depicted, for instance, in the Alsfeld Passion play of the end of the century.[48] She appeals to all Christendom, to the earth, to the very stones for sympathy; she makes John repeat again and again the cruel tale of all the tortures and wounds inflicted upon her son; she wails at seeing him hanging yonder so naked and bare, his cheeks so pallid and hollow; she turns to the Jews and beseeches them to take her own life instead of his:—all this reveals the deepest feelings of a mother's heart. Yet in the same play there are scenes of such caustic

Alsfelder Passionsspiel.

[48] Froning III, 779 ff. A large part of these lamentations is taken verbatim from the so-called *Trierer Marienklage* (Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied* II, 347). The Judas-scene *ib.* 681 ff.

sarcasm and such grotesque caricature that we might fancy ourselves face to face with a farcical satire rather than a religious tragedy. This, for instance, is the way Judas haggles with the Jews about the traditional thirty pieces of silver. In the first place he demands thirty shillings; subsequently he comes down to thirty pennies instead. But he has them counted out to him one by one, and he is as scrupulous in the examination of the different coins as a mediæval tradesman dealing with people from a neighbouring town.

> Judas: This penny is red.
> Caiphas: 'Tis good enough to buy meat and bread.
> Judas: This one is bad.
> Caiphas: Judas, hear what a good ring it has.
> Judas: This one is broken.
> Caiphas: Well, take another and stop grumbling.
> Judas: This one has a hole in it.
> Caiphas: Take another, then; here is a good one.
> Judas: This one has a false stamp.
> Caiphas: If you don't want it, I'll give you another.
> Judas: This one is black.
> Caiphas: Look at this one, and be done with it.
> Judas: This crack is altogether too large.
> Caiphas: Judas, if you'll hang yourself, here's a rope.
> Judas: This one is leaden.
> Caiphas: How long are you going to make fun of us?

Hessisches Weihnachtsspiel.

In a Hessian Christmas play, also of the end of the fifteenth century,[49] Joseph and Mary appear as a poor homeless couple. They wander from house to house, nobody is willing to take them in, and even in the vagrants' home, where they at last find shelter, poor Joseph must submit to the most humiliating insults heaped upon him by two servant-girls. When the child is born, the most necessary provisions are lacking; no food, no bedding for the mother, not even swaddling-clothes for the infant. But Mary comforts herself: naked are we

[49] Froning III, 902 ff.

born, naked are we to go hence. And old Joseph makes a most devoted father. He succeeds in hunting up a cradle for the baby, he has a pair of old trousers which will do very well for swaddling-clothes; and how happy he sits there rocking the little one to sleep and singing to him a German lullaby!

Redentiner Osterspiel.

But if we wish to see the religious drama of the fifteenth century at its best, if we wish to know what a wealth of earnestness and humour, of spiritual fervour and sturdy joy of the world it contained, if we would fully realize the life-giving influence of city freedom upon the popular conceptions of the old sacred lore, we must turn to an Easter play written at Redentin near Wismar in 1464.[60] Here we have a worthy counterpart to the best creations of sixteenth-century art, to works like Dürer's Passion (1511) or Brüggemann's noble altar-piece in Schleswig cathedral (1515). Here more deeply than in any other of these plays are we made to feel that wonderful blending of the secular and the religious, the ephemeral and the eternal, which gives to the city life of the end of the Middle Ages its unique and ineffaceable charm. Here we find ourselves transported into a time when sacred history had acquired all the actuality of local happenings, when every crucifix on the roadside was a Golgotha, every cathedral a Jerusalem, every baptismal font a Jordan in which at any time the figure of the Saviour might be seen, bowing down before the Baptist, while from above would be heard the word: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

The play begins with the resurrection of Christ, but the resurrection takes place, not in Jerusalem, but in the good old town of Wismar itself. Pilate, who appears as the type of a stately, somewhat phlegmatic burgomaster, hears a rumour that Christ's followers intend to steal his body; and

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[60] Froning I, 107 ff.

therefore details four knights to watch the grave, one to the north, one to the south, one to the east, and one to the west. The knights behave in a manner altogether suitable to representatives of that vagrant soldiery which in those times of club-law were an object of both terror and ridicule to the peaceful citizen. They brag about their prowess, clatter with their swords, threaten to smash any one who shall dare to come near them; and then go quietly to sleep, having first made an arrangement with the night-watchman, who is stationed on the steeple of the cathedral, to keep on the lookout in their place. The watchman sees a vessel approaching on the Baltic Sea. He tries to wake the knights, but in vain. He hears the dogs barking, and again vainly tries to arouse the sleepers. He calls out the midnight hour. And now a chorus of angels is heard on high, the earth is shaken, Jesus arises and sings:

Nu synt alle dynke vullenbracht
De dar vor in der ewicheit weren bedacht,
Dat ik des bitteren dodes scholde sterven,
Unt deme mynschen gnade wedder vorwerven.

From these scenes, in which the burlesque and the serious are so quaintly mingled, we now pass on to events of truly sublime simplicity and serene grandeur. Jesus descends into hell to rescue the souls of the Fathers. His approach is foreshadowed in the joyous expectancy of the waiting souls. They see a wondrous light spreading overhead. Abel is the first to interpret this as a sign that the time of their redemption is nigh; but the others at once join with him. Adam rejoices in the hope of regaining paradise. Isaiah is sure that this is the light of God; for is it not an evident fulfilment of what is written in his own book of prophecy (he quotes himself in Latin): "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light"? And Seth recalls the twig which five thousand six hundred years ago he planted at God's behest that it might grow into the tree

of salvation (the cross). Now John the Baptist appears as forerunner of the Saviour, and announces his coming. In vain do Lucifer and Satan summon their hosts, in vain do they lock the gates of hell. Surrounded by the archangels, Christ advances. With a few majestic words he silences Satan, the "accursed serpent"; with a mere sign of his hand he bursts the gates; Lucifer he commands to be bound until the day of judgment. And now the souls stream forward, exulting, jubilating, stammering with joy and gratitude; and Jesus takes them by the hand and greets them, and then commits them to the care of Michael, the archangel, that he may lead them upward into paradise.

At the end of the play we return once more to the sphere of the burlesque, to a satire upon social conditions of the fifteenth century. Through the rescue of the souls of the Fathers, hell has become desolate; Lucifer, therefore, chained as he is, sends his servants out to catch new souls. But the devils return empty-handed and discouraged: through Christ's death and resurrection, they say, the world has become so good that very little chance is left for hell. Lucifer, however, is not discouraged. He has heard that a great plague is raging just now in the city of Lübeck, and he sends his messengers out for a second time, to try their fortunes in the Hanse town. And this time they come back laden with souls of sinners, sinners of every kind and description. There is the baker, who deceived his customers by using too much yeast in his bread and too little flour. There is the shoemaker, who sold sheepskin for Cordovan leather. There is the tailor, who stole half of his customers' cloth. There is the inn-keeper, who adulterated his beer and served it with too much foam in the pot. There is the butcher, who stuffed his sausages with all sorts of refuse. There is the grocer, who used false measure and weight. There is even the priest, who so often overslept the mass and so often celebrated the evening service in the tavern. In short,—this is the moral

pointed out by the concluding chorus,—Lucifer is right: the power of evil has not yet been broken. Sin is still mighty in the land, and only by cleaving to God and his word can we be saved. And only then can we truly sing with the angels: 'Christ is risen.'

Other plays. The Fastnachtspiel.

It would be easy to multiply these examples. It might be shown how the same realistic tendency, the same blending of the religious and the secular which is revealed in these Christmas, Passion, and Easter plays, also manifested itself in other dramatic representations of biblical or legendary themes, as, for instance, in the plays of *The Wise and the Foolish Virgins* (1322),[51] of *Theophilus* (fifteenth century),[52] of *Frau Jutta* (1480).[53] It might be shown how in the Shrovetide plays[54] of the fifteenth century the secular, detached from its connection with the religious, ran riot and degenerated into uncouth vulgarity. But enough has been said to prove that the drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, no less than the Mystic prose, the Volkslied, and the narrative and didactic poetry of the same period, was a result of that wonderful awakening of individual thought and feeling which politically led to the classic epoch of German city freedom. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, all these forces worked together to bring about those two great movements which mark the final breaking away from mediæval authority: Humanism and the religious Reformation.

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[51] *Das Spiel von den zehen Jungfrauen* ed. M. Rieger, *Germania* X, 311 ff.

[52] Ed. Ettmüller 1849; Hoffmann 1853. 54.

[53] A. v. Keller, *Fastnachtspiele nr.* 111.

[54] Five of the better Shrovetide plays (*Der Fastnacht und der Fasten Recht, Von Papst Kardinal und Bischöfen, Des Türken Fastnachtspiel*, by Hans Rosenplüt; *Fastnachtspiel von einem Bauerngericht* by Hans Folz; and the anonymous *Spiel von einem Kaiser und einem Abt*) reprinted from Keller by Froning, *l. c.* III, 963 ff. Cf. *GG.* § 93. Alwin Schultz, *Deutsches Leben im* 14. *u.* 15. *Jhdt.* II, 398 ff.

CHAPTER V.

THE ERA OF THE REFORMATION.

(The Sixteenth Century.)

The history of the German people in the sixteenth century presents a strange and tragic spectacle. At the beginning of the period Germany, of all European nations, shows the highest intellectual promise. The long pent-up spirit of revolt against mediæval class rule and scholasticism is breaking forth with elemental power. Great men are standing up for a great cause. Copernicus is pointing toward an entirely new conception of the physical universe. Erasmus and Hutten, Holbein and Dürer, Melanchthon and Luther, each in his own sphere, are preparing the way for a new and higher form of national life. It seems as though a strong and free German state, a golden age of German art and literature, were near at hand. At the end of the century all these hopes have been crushed. While England is entering the Elizabethan era, while the Dutch are fighting the most glorious struggle of modern times for free thought and free government, Germany, the motherland of religious liberty, is hopelessly lost in the conflict between Jesuit and Protestant fanaticism, and is gradually drifting toward the abyss of the Thirty Years' War.

Contrast between beginning and end of the Reformation.

How different would the course of events have been if there had existed at that time a broad national spirit, a strong public opinion, in Germany! When, in 1521, Luther

at the diet of Worms, face to face with emperor, princes, and cardinals, upheld the freedom of conscience, the heart of Germany was with him. Never before in German history had there arisen a national hero like him; never before had there been a moment fraught with such weighty possibilities. On Luther's side there were the most enlightened of the princes and nearly all of the gentry. The cities greeted his teaching as a weapon against hierarchical aggression; the peasantry hailed it as a promise of social betterment. What might not have been accomplished if all the friends of reform had united, if all party desires and class aspirations had been merged in one grand popular uprising?

No great opportunity was ever more irretrievably lost. Instead of a nation rallying to establish its independence, we see separate classes and sects, regardless of the welfare of the whole, attempting to secure their own individual liberties. Instead of a great idea sweeping everything before it, we see the inevitable defeat of small conspiracies. Instead of a continuous growth and gradual expansion of the Protestant cause, we see it, after a first glorious effort, step by step retreating, and at last confining itself within the narrow limits of an orthodoxy not a whit more rational and far less imposing than the old system of papal supremacy.

The religious Reformation had been born out of the bitter agonies of an ardent soul seeking after truth; it was brought to a close by a compromise between opposing political powers. It had bidden fair to inaugurate a new era of national unification and greatness; its real effect was a further step in the dismemberment and weakening of the empire. Its first outcry had been Luther's: "Ich kann nicht anders, Gott helfe mir, amen"; its final word was the absolutist doctrine: "*cujus regio, eius religio.*" Was there ever a noble cause more shamefully disfigured and perverted?

In order to understand fully the effect of this deplorable

course of events upon the literature of the period, we must remember that the two preceding centuries had been marked by a steady growth of realistic tendencies. More and more had literature come to be an expression of the needs of the day, more and more had it imbued itself with democratic ideas, more and more had it become the prophecy of a great intellectual and social revolution. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, it seemed as if the hour of fulfilment had come, as if the vital energy of the people had been nourished long enough to give birth to a new idealism, inspired with a larger conception of humanity, and therefore fuller of life and higher-reaching than that of any previous age.

The democratic movement at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

What is it that gives such an imperishably youthful charm to the German Humanistic movement of the first decades of the sixteenth century?[1] What was it that inspired such men as Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Hutten? Was it simply the revival of classical learning? Was it merely delight in the discovery of a great civilization buried beneath the wreck of centuries? Was it preeminently an æsthetic pleasure in the splendour of Ciceronian eloquence or the massiveness of Augustan verse? Far from it. More than anything else, it was the instinctive feeling that a new era in the history of mankind was dawning, that the time had come to throw off the fetters of obsolete tradition, and to reach out, each man for himself, into the heights of human freedom and greatness. It was this spirit that moved the quiet, retiring Reuchlin to

Humanism.

[1] A bibliography of German Humanism in L. Geiger, *Renaissance u. Humanismus in Italien u. Deutschland p.* 573 ff. For earlier German Humanism cf. *GG.* § 97 (Niclas von Wyle, Heinr. Stainhoewel, Albrecht von Eyb). M. Herrmann, *Albrecht von Eyb u. d. Frühzeit d. deutschen Humanismus.* K. Burdach, *Vom MA. zur Reformation.* For Konrad Celtis cf. *Allg. D. Biogr.* IV, 82 ff.

throw down the gauntlet to the whole system of clerical learning[2]; that made Hutten exclaim[3]:

> Die warheit ist von newem gborn
> Und hatt der btrugk sein schein verlorn,
> Des sag Gott yeder lob und eer
> Und acht nit fürter lugen meer;

that put upon the lips of Erasmus the prayer[4]: "*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*" The Humanistic movement, in a word, was an intellectual revolution, a search for new principles of human conduct, an attempt to reconstruct the spiritual life by the light of human reason, the first great declaration, if not of the rights, at least of the dignity of man.

The Humanists have left no works which can be called great. Their force was spent in battle. They were pioneers, they were violent partisans. Into the finer problems and the deeper mysteries of life they did not enter. There is a certain shallowness and showiness in even the best of them. And yet who can fail to perceive in them a breath of that spirit which has created the ideal world of modern humanity?

Erasmus.

Erasmus, the acknowledged leader of the movement, has very fittingly been compared to Voltaire. He was a scoffer and a merciless critic. No more scathing satire of the existing order of things has ever been written than his *Moriae Encomium* (1509). To represent the world as ruled by Folly was no new device; countless satirists of the Middle Ages had done the same thing. The

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[2] Cf. his *Augenspiegel*, the *Defensio contra calumniatores Colonienses*, and other polemics called forth through his controversy with the Jew-baiter Pfefferkorn. Geiger, *Joh. Reuchlin p.* 205 ff.

[3] Preface to his *Gesprächbüchlein* ed. Balke, *DNL.* XVII, 2, *p.* 285.

[4] *Colloquia familiaria*, Opera Lugd. Batav. 1703, I, 683. Cf. A. Horawitz *Ueber die colloquia des Erasmus v. R.* in *Histor. Taschenb.* VI, 6, *p.* 55 ff. Émile Amiel, *Érasme p.* 337 f.

new thing, the thing which startled the contemporaries and gave this book at once a European reputation, was the unsparingly empirical manner, the cold rationalistic way, in which even the most fundamental beliefs and the most sacred idols of the time were held up to ridicule. Former critics had tried to heal the defects of church and state from within; here was a man who looked at the whole hierarchical system from without, who dared to place his own private reason over and above the towering mass of time-honoured fallacies and hallowed superstitions. Do we not seem to hear an *écrasez l'infâme* in the following passage[5] on the inane wisdom of the schoolmen of the time?

"Whilst being happy in their own opinion, and as if they dwelt in the third heaven, they look with haughtiness on all others as poor creeping things, and could almost find in their hearts to pitie 'em. Whilst hedg'd in with so many magisterial definitions, conclusions, corollaries, propositions explicit and implicit, they abound with so many starting holes that Vulcan's net cannot hold 'em so fast, but they'll slip through with their distinctions, with which they so easily cut all knots asunder that a hatchet could not have done it better. They explicate the most hidden mysteries according to their own fancie, as: how the world was first made; how original sin is deriv'd to posterity; in what manner, how much room, and how long time, Christ lay in the Virgin's womb; how accidents subsist in the Eucharist without their subject. But these are common and threadbare. These are worthy of our great and illuminated divines, as the world calls 'em, at these, if ever they fall athwart 'em, they prick up, as: whether there was any instant of time in the generation of the Second Person; whether there be more than one filiation in Christ; whether it be a possible proposition that God the Father hates the Son, or whether it was possible that Christ could have taken upon him the likeness of a woman, or of the devil, or of an ass, or of a stone, or of a gourd; and then how that gourd should have preach't, wrought miracles, or been hung on the cross. There are infinite of these subtile trifles and other more subtile than these, of notions, relations,

[5] Trsl. by John Wilson, London 1668, *p.* 97. Cf. J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus p.* 129 ff. For similar attacks by Buschius, Bebel, and other Humanists cf. Paulsen, *Gesch. d. gel. Unterrichts p.* 47. 97.

instants, formalities, quiddities, ecceities which no one can perceive who could not look through a stone wall and discover those things through the thickest darkness that never were."

Or, to take another example, does not this passage on the follies of saint-worship[6] sound like the frivolous laughter of a La Mettrie?

"As every one of them (the saints) has his particular gift, so, also, his particular form of worship. As, one is good for the tooth ache; another for groaning women; a third for stolen goods; a fourth for making a voyage prosperous; and a fifth to cure sheep of the rot; and so of the rest, for it would be too tedious to run over all. And some there are that are good for more things than one; but chiefly the Virgin Mother, to whom the common people do in a manner attribute more than to the Son. Yet what do they beg of these saints, but what belongs to Folly? To examine it a little: among all those offerings which are so frequently hung up in churches, nay up to the very roof of some of 'em, did you ever see the least acknowledgment from any one that he had left his Folly, or grown a hair's-breadth the wiser? One scapes a shipwrack and gets safe to shore. Another, run through in a duel, recovers. Another, while the rest were fighting, ran out of the field, no less luckily than valiantly. Another, condemn'd to be hang'd, by the favour of some saint or other, a friend to thieves, got off himself by impeaching his fellows. Another escap'd by breaking prison. Another's poison turning to a looseness prov'd his remedy rather than death; and that to his wife's no small sorrow, in that she lost both her labour and her charge. Another's cart broke, and he sav'd his horses. Another preserv'd from the fall of a house. Another taken tardy by her husband, persuades him out of 't. All these hang up their tablets; but no one gives thanks for his recovery from Folly. So sweet a thing it is, not to be wise, that, on the contrary, men rather pray against anything than Folly."

Undoubtedly, Erasmus and his followers were sarcastic rather than appreciative, destroyers rather than organizers. But they were destroyers, not because they were without ideals, but because they felt the value of the ideal so deeply that the grossness and self-sufficiency of the actual world aroused in them a noble indignation. And they were sarcastic, not because they held low views of human life, but

[6] *Encom. Mor. p.* 69.

because they held higher views about the dignity and vocation of man than the bulk of their contemporaries.

There is no single book which demonstrates this more clearly than Erasmus's *Manual of the Christian Soldier* (*Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, 1509), one of the first unmistakable attempts in modern history to make reason the basis of religious experience. Reason is to Erasmus "a king, a divine counsellor of man." "Enthroned in its lofty citadel, mindful of its exalted origin, it does not admit a thought of baseness or impurity."[7] It is to reason that we must turn to fathom the divine wisdom, it is here that the roots of self-perfection lie. To the unenlightened mind the Bible remains a labyrinth of contradictions, a book full of insipid and even immoral incidents. Through rational interpretation we learn to understand it as a symbolical expression of moral truths. An unthinking piety is without avail. "Christ despises the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood, if it is not taken spiritually."[8] "God hates a well-fed, corpulent devoutness."[9] But the rational believer sees the working of the divine spirit everywhere, his eye is open to the beauty, the wisdom, the virtue of all ages, he penetrates to the very core of Christianity. "For Christ is nothing else than love, simplicity, patience, purity, in short all that he himself taught; and the devil is nothing but that which draws us away from those ideals."[10]

It is evident that this sort of rationalism, bursting as it did upon an age full of religious emotions and in the main guided by an undoubting faith, could not help acting as a moral dissolvent; and it is not to be wondered at that so many of the young Humanists were plunged into a life of wild conflicts and consuming passions. In most of them

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[7] *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* ed. Ludg. Bat. 1641 *p.* 96 : rationi tanquam regi. 97 : consultor ille divinus, sublimi in arce praesidens, memor originis suae, nihil sordidum, nihil humile cogitat.

[8] *Ib. p.* 171. [9] *Ib. p.* 173. [10] *Ib. p.* 145.

the result was simply a sinking to the level of the commonplace. But when, as in the case of Ulrich von Hutten, a sturdy mind and a fiery soul were wasted in this conflict, the sadness of this issue was relieved by a note of genuine greatness. For in Hutten certainly, if in none other, this very struggle brought out all the intellectual enthusiasm and moral idealism, which, after all, were the fundamental forces of the Humanistic movement.

Hutten.

If Erasmus has been compared to Voltaire, Hutten may justly be called a forerunner of Lessing. No one, not even Luther, has fought more sturdily for the freedom of conscience, no one has been a better hater of any kind of usurpation. His life stands to us as a symbol of that wonderful flight of thought and feeling which the German people took under the inspiration of the first great moments of Luther's work.

Hutten had already won his place as a writer when Luther struck his first blows against the papal system. He had taken part in that memorable campaign of the Humanists against the old time scholasticism, which began with Reuchlin's protest against the Dominican persecution of Jewish literature, and which culminated in the famous *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum* (1515–17), that collection of fictitious letters presenting a glaring caricature of the monkish party with all its filth, ignorance, and fanaticism. In biting satire he had held up to ridicule the arrogance and nothingness of professorial learning, contrasting it with the fulness and glory of a life devoted to the free pursuit of truth.[11] In high-flown rhetoric he had entreated the emperor to guard the honour of the state against inner and outer foes.[12] But it was only Luther's redeeming word

[11] Cf. the satire *Nemo, Schriften* ed. Böcking III, 107 ff. Especially significant the dedication to Crotus Rubianus, *ib.* I, 187. Strauss, *Ulrich v. Hutten p.* 105 ff.—The *Epistolae obscur. vir.* in the Suppl. to the *Schriften.* Cf. Paulsen *l. c.* 49 ff.

[12] Cf. especially the *Epigrams* addressed to Maximilian (*Schr.* III,

that aroused him to the full consciousness of his own mission.

To be sure, the chief object of his writings remained as it had been, war to the knife against the church of Rome. But the spirit of his attacks underwent a change under Luther's influence. Formerly he had been a scoffer, now he became a prophet; formerly he had addressed himself to the small circle of the educated, now he became the spokesman of a whole people; formerly he had written in Latin exclusively, now he translated his own writings into German; formerly he had looked down upon the theological disputes of the ecclesiastics as unworthy trifles, now he recognised the Wittenberg monk as his "dearest brother," as "the servant of God," and pledged to his cause his own life and earthly possessions.[13]

From the artistic point of view, Hutten's most important contribution to the literature of the Reformation are the two volumes of *Dialogues* which appeared in 1520 and 1521. A true little masterpiece, full of Lucianic wit, and teeming with a noble patriotic fervour, is the scene, in *Die Anschauenden*, where Sol and Phaeton from their heavenly heights look down upon the imperial diet held at Augsburg in 1518.[14] Their attention is attracted by a magnificent procession: cardinal Gaetani, who, as Sol explains to his son, has been sent by the pope to extort money from the Germans, is being conducted to the city hall in solemn state. Phaeton asks: "How long is the pope going to play this shameful game?" Sol: "Until the Germans, whom up to the present time he has led by the nose, shall recover their senses." Phaeton: "Is the time near when they will

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205 ff. Strauss *l. c. p.* 65 ff.) and the orations against Ulric of Würtemberg (*Schr.* IV, 1 ff. Strauss *p.* 79 ff.).

[13] *Eyn klag über den Luterischen Brandt zu Mentz, Schr.* III, 459.

[14] *Die Anschauenden* ed. Balke, *DNL.* XVII, 2, *p.* 295 ff.—For the dates of Hutten's Reformation pamphlets cf. S. Szamatólski, *Ulrichs v. Hutten deutsche Schriften p.* 53 ff.

recover their senses?" Sol: "Very near. For this cardinal will be the first to go home with empty bags, to the great dismay of the Holy City, where they never would have believed the barbarians would stand their own ground." Phaeton: "The Germans, then, belong to the barbarians?" Sol: "According to the judgment of the Romans they do, they no less than the French and all other peoples outside of Italy. But if you consider good morals and friendly intercourse, zeal in all virtues, steadiness and honesty of mind, then the Germans are the most highly cultivated nation, and the Romans the most hopeless barbarians. For they are corrupted through effeminacy and luxury; and you find with them fickleness and inconstancy, little faith and trust, but trickery and malice more than with any other people." Phaeton: "I like what you tell me of the Germans, if they only were not given so much to drunkenness." There follows an animated conversation between the two heavenly observers about the social and political condition of the German people, and the abuses of the Roman church, which, however, is suddenly cut short when they hear the cardinal in great excitement flinging angry words at them from below. Incensed at their freedom of speech, he pronounces the papal excommunication against them, whereupon with a scornful smile they leave him to the contempt of mankind. Phaeton: "I leave you to the laughter of the Germans. May they chase you away with shame, and make you an example for future times. Be the derision of the world! That is a fitting punishment for you." Sol: "Let the wretch alone. It is time to turn our chariot downward, and to give room to the evening star. Let *him yonder* go on lying, cheating, stealing, robbing, and pillaging at his own risk." Phaeton: "Yes, and go to the deuce, too! But I'll drive on the horses and resume our westward course."

If this dialogue is distinguished by elegance of composition and gracefulness of invention, there are others that excel it in depth of passion. What an irresistible, over-

whelming force there is in the repetition of those threefold accusations which like echoing thunder roll upon us again and again from the *Roman Triad* (*Die Römische Dreifaltigkeit*)![15] "Three things uphold the Roman authority: the papal power, relics, and indulgences. Three things are brought home by those who make a pilgrimage to Rome: a bad conscience, a sick stomach, and an empty purse. Three things are killed at Rome: a good conscience, religion, and a binding oath. Three things the Romans sneer at: the example of the ancients, St. Peter's memory, and the last judgment. Three things are banished from Rome: simplicity, continence, and honesty. Three things are for sale at Rome: Christ, spiritual offices, and women." And what reader, even of the present day, can fail to be thrilled by the flaming words with which Hutten in his reply to the papal excommunication against Luther (*Bulla vel Bullicida*) summons the German youth to bring succour to endangered Liberty?[16] "Oh, hither, ye freemen! It is our common cause, our common weal! The flame of war is spreading. Come hither all ye who want to be free. Here the tyrants shall be smitten, here the bondage shall be broken. Where are you, freemen? Where are you, nobles? Men of great names, where are you? Heads of nations, why do you not rally to deliver the common fatherland from this plague? Is there no one who is ashamed of servitude and cannot wait to be free?—They have heard me. A hundred thousand I see coming on. Thanks to the gods! Germany has become herself! Now woe to you, bull of Leo!"

Ulrich von Hutten could indeed say of himself[17]:

Ich habs gewagt mit sinnen
Und trag des noch kein reu;
Mag ich nit dran gewinnen,
Noch muss man spüren treu.

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[15] Cf. Strauss, *Huttens Gespräche p.* 114 ff.
[16] *Ib. p.* 259. [17] *DNL.* XVII, 2, *p.* 269.

He could indeed call himself Truth's most devoted champion[18]:

Von wahrheit ich will nimmer lan,
Das soll mir bitten ab kein mann.
Auch schafft zu stillen mich kein wehr,
Kein bann, kein acht, wie vast und sehr
Man mich darmit zu schrecken meint.
Wie wol mein fromme mutter weint
Do ich die sach hett gfangen an—
Gott woll sie trösten—es muss gan!

And if his life was by no means free from blemishes, if the flame of his passion did not always burn purely, he at least never palliated his own defects. And Death, finding him, as it did, wounded, disarmed, and with broken hopes, still found him a man.

Luther.

There can be no doubt that Luther, in his first great revolutionary writings, strove, although in a different spirit, after exactly the same ideal which the Humanists had at heart: a strong, sweeping religious individualism. That he himself felt this to be the underlying thought of his *Theses* against the sale of indulgences (1517) is shown by the fact that in sending them to a friend he signed himself as "Martinus Eleutherius" (Martin the Freeman), adding these unmistakable words[19]: "Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Why did most of the great teachers incur hatred and envy, if not because they were bold despisers of old far-famed wisdom, or because, without consulting the preservers of old knowledge, they brought forward a new thing?" But the works in which Luther set forth what is truly vital and permanent in his doctrine, in which he spoke the word that was to revolutionize all modern life, in which he anticipated what

[18] *DNL.* XVII, 2, *p.* 286.

[19] *Luthers Briefe* ed. de Wette I, 73. Cf. Th. Kolde, *Martin Luther* I, 146.—A masterly presentation of Luther's religious development in K. Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte* V, 1, p. 221 ff.

has become a reality only in our day, were the three great manifestoes of the year 1520: the address *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Improvement of Christian Society*, the pamphlet *On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, and the essay *On the Liberty of a Christian Man.*

Let us examine somewhat more closely these three great pillars of our own spiritual existence.

Von des christlichen Standes Besserung.

The address to the German nobility is Luther's first comprehensive avowal of religious independence. As Joshua led the children of Israel against Jericho, so Luther in this treatise is going to lead the German knighthood against the walls of Rome; and he prays God to give him a trumpet, before whose blast the straw and paper walls of the enemy shall fall. Three such walls there are, behind which the papacy has intrenched itself.

The first wall is the assertion that there exists a special spiritual order, distinct from the secular, and in all respects superior to it. This, Luther says, is a mere fiction of Rome. All Christians are of a truly spiritual order. Christ has made us all priests: the pope can make no one a priest. "The infant, when he creeps out of the baptismal font, may boast to have already been consecrated priest, bishop, and pope."[20] There is a difference between men with regard to their external occupation only. As there are shoemakers, smiths, peasants, so there may be priests also; that is, men whose external occupation it is to administer the public services of religion. Inwardly, every true Christian has a right to this office; to its outward exercise only he is entitled on whom the right has been conferred by the community. The community, then, elects the priest, it deposes him, it is the only sovereign in the spiritual administration. "If it should happen that a person elected to such an office

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[20] *An den christl. Adel deutscher Nation von des christl. Standes Besserung, NddLw. nr.* 4, *p.* 8.

through his abuse of it were deposed, then he would be as he was before,—a peasant or a burgher, like the rest."[21] Thus the first wall of the papists is shattered.

The second wall is the assertion that nobody but the pope has the right to interpret the Holy Scriptures. This is a wantonly concocted fable. Has not the pope often erred? Have there not been, in all ages, pious Christians who understood Christ's spirit better than the pope? Are not all of us priests? Why, then, should we not be able to perceive and judge what is right and wrong in belief? What means the word of Paul: A spiritual man judges all things, and is judged by nobody? "So let us, then, be courageous and free; and let not the spirit of liberty be stifled by the fictitious assumptions of popery; but boldly forward! to judge all that they do and all that they leave undone according to our trustful understanding of the Scriptures. If God spoke through an ass against the prophet Balaam, why should he not speak now through us against the pope?"[22]

The third wall is the claim of the pope that he alone has the right to call an ecclesiastical council. This wall falls by itself with the two others. When the pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, then it is our duty to uphold the Scriptures against the pope. We must arraign him before the community, and therefore the community must be gathered in a council. And every Christian, no matter of what rank or condition, has a sacred obligation to co-operate in such an endeavour. "If there is a fire in the city, shall the citizens stand still and let the fire burn because they are not the burgomaster, or because the fire perhaps began in the burgomaster's own house?"[23] So, in Christ's spiritual city, if there arises the fire of scandal, it is the duty and right of every man to lend a hand to quench the flame.

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[21] *NddLw. nr.* 4, *p.* 9. [22] *Ib. p.* 14. [23] *Ib. p.* 15.

There follow in the greater part of the pamphlet a description of the evils that existed in the church of Luther's time, and radical propositions for their reform. Germany, he says, ought to be purged of the vile, devilish rule of the Romans. For Rome is draining the nation in such a way that "it is a wonder that we have still anything left to eat." "It would not be strange if God should rain fire and brimstone from heaven, and hurl Rome into the abyss, as in olden times he hurled Sodom and Gomorrah. O noble princes and lords, how long will you suffer your land and your people to be a prey to these ravaging wolves?"[24] All money contributions to Rome he would have forbidden; every envoy of the pope that should come to Germany he would have ordered to quit the country or to jump into the Rhine, to give the Roman brief a cold bath. The German bishops should cease to be mere figures and tools in the hands of the pope; none of them should be allowed to ask to have his election confirmed in Rome. The temporal power of the pope should be entirely abolished. All holidays ought to be done away with, or restricted to Sundays. All pilgrimages ought to be prohibited, and the chapels of pilgrimage be demolished. The marriage of priests should be allowed. Spiritual punishments—as interdict, ban, suspension—are horrible plagues imposed by the evil spirit upon Christianity, and ought, therefore, to be abrogated. On the whole, the entire canon law, from its first letter to the last, ought to be uprooted.

This pamphlet to the German nobility preaches, indeed, nothing less than a complete revolution of the religious and social order as it then existed. And Luther himself was fully aware that these few pages contained the programme of a new chapter in the history of mankind. "I consider well" (these are his closing words[25]) "that I have pitched my song high and brought forward many things that will be

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[24] *NddLw. nr.* 4, *p.* 20. 24. [25] *Ib. p.* 79. 80.

thought impossible. But what shall I do? I am bound to say it. I would rather have the world angry with me than God. Therefore, let them come on, whether he be pope, bishop, priest, monk, or scholar; they are just the right ones to persecute truth, as they have always done. May God give us all a Christian understanding, and, above all, to the Christian nobility of the German nation a true spiritual courage to do their best for the poor church. Amen."

De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae.

A further step in the emancipation of secular life from ecclesiastical pretensions was taken in the pamphlet on the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, which appeared in the same year with the address to the nobility. One of the chief means by which the mediæval church walled about the life of the people was the doctrine of the sacraments. Without baptism, no promise of grace; without confirmation, no continuance of it; without holy communion, no sight of God; without the sanction of the church, no marital union; without the authority of the church, no right of priesthood; without extreme unction, no hope of eternal life. From the bondage of these ecclesiastical enactments Luther finds in the Bible the right to free the people. Neither confirmation, nor penance, nor marriage, nor consecration of priests, nor extreme unction, have a right to existence, as church institutions, through any recognition or especial promise in the Bible.[26] Above all, the sanction of marriage and the anointing of priests are nothing but arbitrary encroachments of the church upon purely human relations.

"Since matrimony," he says,[27] "has existed from the beginning of the world, and still continues even among unbelievers, there are no

[26] The real meaning of sacrament, according to Luther, is "a promise of blessing from God to his children, confirmed by an outward and visible sign." Two such promises, accompanied by two such signs, he finds in baptism and communion; and these alone he recognises as means of grace.

[27] *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae, Luthers Werke, Krit. Gesammtausg.* VI, 550 f.

reasons why it should be called a sacrament of the new law and the church alone. The marriages of the patriarchs were not less marriages than ours, nor are those of unbelievers less real than those of believers; and yet no one calls them a sacrament. Moreover, there are among believers wicked husbands and wives worse than any gentiles. Why should we, then, say: there is sacrament here, and not among the gentiles? Shall we so trifle with baptism and the church as to say that matrimony is a sacrament in the church only?"

And still more strongly than in the address to the nobility he condemns the self-glorification of the priesthood, asserting again and again the inalienable rights of common humanity.

"What then," he exclaims,[28] "is there in you that is not to be found in any layman? Your tonsure and your vestments? Wretched priesthood, which consists in tonsure and vestments! Is it the oil poured on your fingers? Every Christian is anointed and sanctified in body and soul with the oil of the Holy Spirit. . . . When I see how far the sacrosanct sanctity of these orders has already gone, I expect that the time will come when the laity will not even be allowed to touch the altar except when they offer money. I almost burst with anger when I think of the impious tyranny of these reckless men who mock and ruin the liberty and glory of the religion of Christ by such frivolous and puerile triflings. . . . Those priests and bishops with whom the church is crowded at the present day, unless they work out their salvation on another plan—that is, unless they acknowledge themselves to be neither priests nor bishops, and repent of bearing the name of an office the work of which they either do not know or cannot fulfil, and thus deplore with prayers and tears the miserable fate of their hypocrisy,—are verily the people of eternal perdition, concerning whom the saying will be fulfilled: 'My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.'"

It shows the extraordinary productivity of Luther's mind that the same year in which he published the address to the

[28] *Luthers Werke l. c.* 566 f.

nobility and the pamphlet on the captivity of the church saw also a third treatise from his hand, in which he tried to establish a positive foundation of morals, which should find its sanction exclusively in the inner consciousness and personality of the individual. This is the precious little tract *On the Liberty of a Christian Man.*

Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen.

The whole of this essay is summed up in the two antithetical propositions which stand at its head [29]: "A Christian man is the freest lord of all, and subject to none. A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one."

Wherein, according to Luther, lies this lordship of the Christian man over all things? Luther answers with the Mystics: in faith, in an inward renunciation of the individual to God, in a personal surrender to his word. To many this faith seems an easy thing; but, in truth, nobody can even conceive of it who has not under deep tribulations acquired it by himself. He, however, who has once attained it cannot cease to speak and write of it. He needs no external thing any longer, he has all—comfort, food, joy, peace, light, power, justice, truth, wisdom, liberty, and all good things in abundance. "The soul which cleaves to the promises of God with a firm faith is so united to them, nay, thoroughly absorbed by them, that it not only partakes in but is penetrated and saturated by all their virtue. For, if the touch of Christ was health, how much more does that spiritual touch, nay, absorption of the word communicate to the soul all that belongs to the word! As is the word, such is the soul made by it,—just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire on account of its union with the fire." [30] Thus the Christian has been elevated above all things, and

[29] *Von der Freiheit eines Christen menschen, Luthers Schriften* ed. E. Wolff, *DNL.* XV, 80. Cf. J. Köstlin, *Luthers Leben*[2] *p.* 223 ff.
[30] *Ib.* 84.

has become lord of all. For nothing can prevent his salvation. "It is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if I only believe." [31]

The second part of the original proposition—namely, that "a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one"—is only an outgrowth of the first. It is the application of faith to practice, it is the message of man's service to mankind.

"The good things which we have from God ought to flow from one to another and become common to all, so that every one of us may, as it were, put on his neighbour, and so behave towards him as if he were himself in his place. They flowed and do flow from Christ to us: he put us on and acted for us as if he himself were what we are. From us they flow to those who have need of them. We conclude, therefore, that a Christian man does not live in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour, or else is no Christian: in Christ by faith, in his neighbour by love. By faith he is carried upwards above himself to God, and by love he sinks back below himself to his neighbour." [32]

Dürer on Luther.

In 1521 Albrecht Dürer, while travelling in the Netherlands, was startled by a rumour of Luther's having been assassinated. The words of passionate grief which this report wrung from Dürer's lips, and which have been preserved in his diary, show perhaps more clearly than any other single utterance what a future there was before the German people if the wonderful idealism of its great reformers had been supported by an unwavering, sober, broad-minded public opinion. After having inveighed against the insidious policy of the Roman See, to which, he thought, Luther had fallen a victim, Dürer goes on to say [33]:

"And if we really should have lost this man who has written in a more enlightened manner than any one for the last hundred and forty

[31] *Ib.* 87 f. [32] *Ib.* 98 f.

[33] Cf. *Albrecht Dürers Tagebuch* ed. F. Leitschuh *p.* 82.

years [i.e., since Wycliffe], and to whom thou, O Heavenly Father, hast given such an evangelic mind, then we pray thee that thou wilt again give thy Holy Spirit to some man who may bind together thy holy Christian church, so that we may live again peaceably, and as true Christians. . . . But as thy Son, Jesus Christ, had to be put to death by the priests in order to rise from death and ascend to heaven, so perhaps thou willest it to be done likewise to thy servant Martin Luther, whom the pope with his money has so treacherously deprived of his life. And as thou didst ordain that Jerusalem be destroyed for it, so thou wilt destroy the arbitrary power of the Roman See. And after that, O Lord, give us the new beautiful Jerusalem, descending from heaven, about which it is written in the Apocalypse, the holy unalloyed Gospel, unobscured by human wilfulness."

Dürer's Four Apostles.

Dürer himself is the most illustrious proof of the artistic perfection to which the inspiration of this great moral uplifting might have led. His Four Apostles, painted in 1526 for the city of Nürnberg, his native town,[34] will forever stand as the most complete incarnation of the German national spirit in the age of Luther. The two principal figures are John and Paul, Luther's favourite

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[34] Cf. M. Thausing, *Dürer p.* 483 ff.—That a victory of the democratic principles underlying the religious Reformation would probably have brought about the growth of a truly national German drama may be inferred from the existence in the first half of the sixteenth century of a Protestant drama which, while preserving the popular character of the religious plays of the fifteenth century, at the same time stands in the service of the new spiritual life. Cf., *e.g.*, *Die Totenfresser* by Pamphilus Gengenbach (c. 1521), *Der Ablasskrämer* by Niklaus Manuel (1525), *Der verlorne Sohn* by Burkard Waldis (1527), Paul Rebhuhn's *Susanna* (1535) in: Froning, *Das Drama der Reformationszeit DNL.* XXII. If we compare with works like these the dramatic productions of the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century: the plays of the English comedians (*DNL.* XXIII.) and their imitators, such as Jacob Ayrer (ed. Keller, *Bibliothek d. Litter. Vereins* LXXVI ff.) and Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick (ed. Tittmann, *Deutsche Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts* XIV.), we find ourselves transported from the free air of popular art into the stifling atmosphere of technical drill, sensational effects, and clownish slang.

writers. John, the type of a tall, strongly built, blond German youth, wrapt in his wide red mantle, standing erect, his chaste, manly, thoughtful head slightly bent forward, his gaze fixed upon the open Bible which he holds in his hands. Paul, the very image of a spiritual warrior. His long flowing beard, the swollen vein in his forehead, the mighty skull, the threatening eye, the massive neck, the majestic folds of his white mantle, the naked sword in his right hand,—all this reminds one of an old Germanic chieftain. But what he fights for is not a hoard of gold, not the booty of fair women, it is the book which he holds clasped in his left hand, it is the same eternal truth, the gospel of redeemed humanity, which John is represented as contemplating. Both figures together bring before us that magnificent union of fearless speculation and firm, unswerving faith which has made the Germany of the Reformation period the classic soil of spiritual and moral freedom.

The turning-point of the Reformation.

We have already spoken of the causes which, between 1525 and 1530, brought the Reformation movement to a standstill, and checked the upward idealistic current of German literature. To say it once more: the chief reason was the absence in the Germany of the sixteenth century of a strong national will, of an enlightened public opinion. Divided into an infinite number of little independent sovereignties, separated in itself by class prejudices and provincial jealousies, without efficient organs of popular legislation, even without a truly national dynasty, the German people did not as yet feel itself as a whole. The result was that the religious Reformation, instead of being borne along by an irresistible tide of national enthusiasm, was forced into the narrow channels of local fanaticism; that Germany, instead of being led into an era of social reconstruction, saw itself plunged into a state of confusion, bordering upon anarchy; and that the enemies of reform found it an easy matter to

quench the new thought soon after it had been kindled. Probably no event in modern history has so decidedly retarded the progress of civilization as the series of isolated revolutionary uprisings and their successive defeats which mark the course of the German Reformation from 1522 to about 1530. First, in 1522, the landed gentry in a bold assault try to overthrow the temporal power of the ecclesiastical magnates ; this conspiracy is easily crushed. Two years later the peasantry, stirred up by Luther's proclaiming the spiritual equality of all men, attempt to shake off the yoke of hereditary bondage ; this rebellion is ruthlessly suppressed. About the same time, the masses of the city population, intoxicated by the doctrine of universal priesthood, are led into a wild communistic movement ; this agitation is mercilessly stamped out. And thus it came about that at the very time (1530) when, in the *Augsburg Confession*, the official form of the Protestant belief was definitely fixed, Protestantism had ceased to represent what in the beginning it had stood for, the deepest hopes and highest aspirations of a united people.

Luther's return to the principle of authority.

Luther himself ended by abandoning the ideals of his early manhood. He had broken with the old sacred tradition ; he had rejected all outward helps to salvation ; he had placed himself on his own ground, alone in all the world, trusting in the personal guidance and protection of God. As a result of his own teaching he now saw the country transformed into a surging sea, tossed, as it seemed to him, by evil doctrines and pernicious contests. Had it, then, really been the voice of God that called him ? or had he lent his ear to the insinuations of Satan ? Persecuted by terrible visions, the very foundations of his faith tottering under him, his life appearing blighted and his work cursed, he sees in his extremity only one way of deliverance. He can only answer these terrible questionings by a blind and implicit faith. He comes forth from the struggle, not as he had

entered it, strong in intellectual fearlessness, but strong in stubborn adherence to a chosen authority ; not any longer as the champion of reason, but as its defamer. Reason now appears to him as the root of all evil ; reason has led man astray from God ; reason is "a light that is only darkness." Without knowledge of the divine grace it is "a poisonous beast with many dragons' heads," it is "an ugly devil's bride," it is "the all-cruellest and most fatal enemy of God." "It is a quality of faith," he says, "that it wrings the neck of reason and strangles the beast which else the whole world with all creatures could not strangle. But how? It holds to God's word, lets it be right and true, no matter how foolish and impossible it sounds." And by thus strangling reason, we offer to God "the all-acceptablest sacrifice and service that can ever be brought to him." [35]

Nothing is a surer evidence of moral greatness than the courage of inconsistency. Nothing makes Luther's figure more impressive than the scars of this Titanic struggle between his former and his later self. Nor has it been without noble fruits for humanity. Out of this very struggle were born those spiritual battle-songs of his,—such as "Ach Gott vom himmel sieh darein," "Aus tiefer not schrei ich zu dir," "Ein feste burg ist unser Gott,"—the power of which will be felt as long as there is a human soul longing for a sight of the divine. And in this very conflict Luther found the inspiration to undertake and carry through that colossal work through which he has become the creator of the modern German language, his translation

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[35] Cf. his Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians (*Werke* ed. Walch VIII, 2043. 2048), quoted by C. Beard, *The Reformation in its relation to Modern Thought p.* 156. 163.—In the last sermon preached by Luther in Wittenberg, Jan. 17, 1546, he says of reason: "Es ist die höchste Hure die der Teufel hat." *Luthers Werke f. d. christl. Haus* ed. Buchwald, Kawerau etc. V, 96.—Selections from Luther's lyrics *DNL.* XV. For his language cf. Wackernagel, *Gesch. d. d. Litt.*[2] II, 8 ff.

of the Bible. And yet how different the intellectual history of Germany and of the world would have been if the man who had given the German people the idea of universal priesthood, who had called on them to fling away the form in order to save the substance of religion, who had grounded the religious life upon individual belief and individual reason, had not ended as the founder of a new orthodoxy and a new absolutism.

The intellectual reaction.

From this time on the higher life of Germany slowly sinks, until toward the middle of the seventeenth century it reaches its lowest ebb. Realism becomes again, what it had been before the Reformation movement, the dominant force in literary production; but it is no longer the youthful realism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, full of buoyancy and hope; it is the realism of disappointment and resignation. It has no message of its own to tell, it only restates what has been told before, it looks backward and not forward. We shall, therefore, not enter here upon the by no means inconsiderable literary output of the second half of the sixteenth century. We shall not speak of the mass of vulgarity and coarseness which flooded the popular prose romances of the time—they are characterized sufficiently by the uncouth figure of *Grobianus*—;[36] nor of the revival which the inanities of chivalric love-adventure found in the tales of *Amadis of Gaul*[37]; nor even of the good-natured honesty, the

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[36] The word occurs for the first time in Seb. Brant's *Narrenschiff* 72, 1:

> Ein nuer heilig heisst Grobian,
> den will ietz füren iederman.

Caspar Scheidt's *Grobianus* (*NddLw. nr.* 34. 35) appeared in 1551. Cf. *GG.* § 158. K. Borinski, *Geschichte d. deutschen Litt. seit d. Ausg. d. MA. p.* 15 f. C. H. Herford, *Literary Relations of England and Germany p.* 379 ff.

[37] *GG.* § 160. Borinski *l. c. p.* 104 f.

racy humour and sturdy patriotism displayed in the writings of such men as Jörg Wickram,[38] Burkard Waldis,[39] Georg Rollenhagen,[40] Nicodemus Frischlin.[41] Only two men, who under more favourable circumstances might have become writers of national influence and leaders in a new progressive movement, may be singled out as the most striking figures of a time which had turned away from its true ideal: Hans Sachs (d. 1576) and Johann Fischart (d. 1590).

Hans Sachs

Hans Sachs is one of the most lovable characters in German literature. This honest Nürnberg burgher, faithful in the narrow circle of his handicraft, and at the same time reaching out into the wide realm of thought and poetry; looking into the world with wondering childlike eyes; transforming all that he sees or hears into a tale or ditty or shrovetide play; restlessly working, and yet always seeming at leisure; serene, true-hearted, public-spirited; a loyal supporter of Luther, whom he greeted (1523) as the "Wittenberg Nightingale," but unfailingly gentle and good-natured even in his polemics—he indeed deserved to be glorified by Goethe[42] as "our dear Master." On what terms of jocular intimacy he stands with the figures of sacred history, not even excluding the saints, Christ, or God the Father himself! One day, he tells us,[43] Saint Peter, walking with Christ through the country, fell to complaining about the bad management of

[38] *GG.* § 159 The *Rollwagenbuchlin* (ed. H. Kurz) appeared in 1555.

[39] *GG.* § 157. The *Esopus* (ed. Tittmann, *Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts* XVI. XVII.) appeared in 1548.

[40] *GG.* § 164. The *Froschmeuseler* (ed. Goedeke, *Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts* VIII. IX.) appeared in 1595.

[41] Cf. D. F. Strauss, *Leben u. Schriften d. Dichters u. Philologen N. Frischlin.* A discussion of the Protestant and Catholic school-drama in Janssen's *Gesch. d. deutschen Volkes seit d. Ausg. d. MA.* VII, 106 ff. Cf. Herford *l.c.* 74 ff. The *Julius Redivivus* appeared in 1585.

[42] *Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung*, *Werke* Hempel I, 113. A just and discriminating discussion of H. Sachs as a poet in *GG.* § 154.

[43] *Sanct Peter mit d. Geiss*, *Deutsche Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts* V, 144 ff.

the world, how the evil prevaileth and the just suffereth without the Lord's stirring a finger. Christ answered: "If you think, Peter, you can do better than I, here! take my staff and command, have full power to curse or to bless, to bring on wind, rain, or sunshine, to punish or to reward, and try to rule the world just for a day." Peter was overjoyed and felt very lordly in his new omnipotence. Meanwhile an old woman came along, driving her goat to pasture and commending it to the protection of God. Peter, to take care of the animal, followed it into the pasture; and as it was an unruly and roving beast, he had to follow it over stock and stone, through underbrush and thicket, until late in the evening he came home, tired out and disgusted. 'Well, Peter," said the Lord, laughing, "should you like to rule the world for another day?'

In another scene[44] we are led back to the time when Adam and Eve, banished from paradise, earn their bread as honest farmers. They have a large family of children, some of them beautiful, clever, and good, some of them ugly, awkward, and rude. The beautiful ones Eve brings up with all motherly care, the ugly ones she lets run about as they please. One day God the Father sent word by an angel that he would call on Adam and Eve to see how they were getting along. When Eve heard this, she rejoiced greatly and put the whole house in good order. She scrubbed the floor, strewed sweet-scented grasses about, and washed and combed and dressed her children, that is, the beautiful children; the ugly ones she hid in dark corners, in the stable, behind the hearth, some of them even in the oven. When the Lord came, the children stood there in a row neatly dressed and well behaved, and gave their hands to him as he stepped up to them, and very nicely said the Lord's

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[44] Cf. *Die ungleichen Kinder Eve* or *Wie Gott der Herr Adam u. Eva ihre Kinder segnet*, *DNL.* XX, 1, *p.* 88 f. 2, *p.* 254. *Deutsche Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts* VI, 173 ff.

prayer when he asked them whether they knew it. And the Lord was pleased and laid his hand on each child's head, saying: "Thou shalt be a king, thou a knight, thou a burgomaster, thou a rich merchant," and so on; and he blessed them all. Then Eve took heart and went and got the ugly children out of their hiding-places, and brought them before God that he might bless them also. And the Lord could not help laughing when he saw this unkempt and doubtful-looking crowd before him; but he had pity on them and blessed them each, saying: "Thou shalt be a shoemaker, thou a weaver, thou a shepherd, thou a farmer," and so forth. And when Eve protested that these callings were too humble, God showed her how all callings were necessary and equally important. For, if all men were kings and princes, burgomasters and councillors, who should till the soil or build houses or provide for food and clothing? And if there were no government, who would maintain the public peace? And Adam and Eve resolved henceforth to bring up all their children with equal care, because they knew they were all destined to work for the common good of man.

His mediævalism.

These are examples of Hans Sachs's art in treating legendary themes. It would be easy to show how the same simple humour, the same serene irony pervades his representations of actual life. The travelling student cheating the peasant woman out of her husband's money[45]; the robber knight lying in ambush for the rich prelate[46]; the gypsy telling peasant girls their fortunes[47]; the husband bringing his jealous wife back to her senses[48]; the landsknecht, the priest, the peasant, the

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[45] Cf. *Der fahrende Schüler im Paradies*, *Fastnachtspiele* ed. Goetze (*NddLw. nr.* 26 ff.) *nr.* 22.—A discussion of the more prominent of the *Fastnachtspiele* in R. Genée, *Hans Sachs u. s. Zeit p.* 335.

[46] Cf. *Das Wildbad l. c. nr.* 27.

[47] Cf. *Die Rockenstube l. c. nr.* 10.

[48] Cf. *Das heiss Eisen, l. c. nr.* 38.

artisan, the beggar vying with each other in lamenting over the hard times [49]—what a wealth of shrewd observation and solid common-sense these scenes, and many others like them, contain! And yet, how can all this compensate us for the absence in Hans Sachs of any large conception of the great revolution which the first decades of the century had attempted? In reading him we have the impression that all the world-moving thoughts of the early Reformation period had swept over the German people without touching it. Although he died thirty years after Luther, he was at heart a mediæval man. Had he felt the pulse of modern life, as Hutten and his friends felt it, he might have become the creator of the modern German drama. In reality he was the last, and greatest, of the Mastersingers. He was in literature what Lucas Cranach, his contemporary, was in art: a master in the minute. For the lofty conceptions and majestic proportions of a Dürer the age had no longer any room.

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[49] Cf. *Die fünf elenden Wanderer, l. c. nr.* 13.—An admirable self-characterization of H. Sachs is found in the preface to the second volume of his poems (1560), quoted in Lützelberger-Frommann, *Hans Sachs, s. Leben u. s. Dichtung p.* 34 f.: "Mein beger, gutherziger, freundtlicher Leser, ist, Du wöllest diss ander Buch meiner Gedicht annemen für ein gemeines, offens Lustgärtlein, so an offner Strassen steht für den gemeinen Mann, darinn man nit allein findet etliche süss fruchttragende Bäumlein zur Speyss der gesunden, sondern Wurtz und Kraut, so resz und pitter sindt, zu artzney, die krancken gemüter zu purgieren und die bösen Feuchtigkeit der Laster ausszutreiben. Dergleich findt man darin wolriechende Feyel, Rosen, und Lylien, auss den man krefftige Wasser, öl und Säfft distilieren und bereyten mag, die abkrefftigen und schwachen gemüter, so bekümmert und abkrefftig sind, zu stercken und wider auffzurichten; auch entlich mancherley schlechte Gewechs und Feldplümlein, als Klee, Distel und Korenplümlein, doch mit schönen, lieblichen Farben, die schwermütigen, Melancolischen gemüter frölich und leichtsinnig zu machen. Bin also guter, tröstlicher Hoffnung, das es on nutz nit abgen werdt."—Cf. also Puschmann's dream, *ib. p.* 38.

Johann Fischart, also, was a man of truly remarkable qualities. He was a stanch upholder of Lutheran principles, a friend of the Huguenots, an inveterate hater of the Jesuits and of Philip II., whose defeat at the hands of the English he commemorated in high-flown verse. He was a keen observer of the life around him. Probably nowhere does the fundamental joyousness of his nature manifest itself so finely as in his poetic glorification of a piece of juvenile sport by which in 1576 some citizens of Zürich distinguished themselves, rowing in one day from Zürich to Strassburg. This event Fischart celebrates, in his *Glückhafft Schiff*,[60] as a feat of manly vigour and sturdy citizenship. Of Xerxes, he says, we hear that he once tried to chain the sea, and ordered it to be beaten; the Venetians every year have a ring thrown into the Adriatic in order to wed it to themselves. But that is not the way to subdue the elements—

Fischart.

Welchs ist dieselb? Nemlich nur die
Welche wir han erfaren hie
Das neulich sie gebrauchet hat
Die jung Mannschaft auss Zürch der Statt,
Das ist, hantfest Arbeitsamkeyt
Und stanthafft Unverdrossenheit
Durch rudern, rimen, stosen, schalten,
Ungeacht Müh ernsthafft anhalten,
Nich schewen Hiz, Schweis, Gfārligkeit,
Noch der Wasser Ungstümmigkeit,
Nicht erschrecken ab Wirbeln, Wällen,
Sonder sich hertzhafft gegenstellen,
Ie meh die Flüss laut rauschend trutzen,
Ie kräftiger hinwider stutzen.

And now the poet accompanies the sturdy crew on their toilsome yet so delightful voyage. How they embark at

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[60] *DNL.* XVIII, 1, *p.* 131 ff.—An excellent account of Fischart's literary character in Goedeke, *Elf Bücher deutscher Dichtung* I, 156 ff. A comprehensive monograph on Fischart is promised by Adolf Hauffen.

early dawn amid the concourse of a cheering populace; how the boat like a water-bird shoots joyfully along; how the Limmat and Aare are soon left behind; how the Rhinestream, when he sees them approaching, wells up with joy, and bids them speed on; how the water dances about the oars; how even the banks of the river respond with merry sound to the greeting of the waves washing to the shore; how in the early morning they fly past Basel, cheered on by the applause of a multitude filling the dock-yards and bridges; how the Sun, seeing that even his noon-day arrows have no effect upon the brave boatsmen, has fresh horses hitched to his chariot and tries to outstrip them in the race; and how at last, shortly after sunset, they reach Strassburg, welcomed by beat of drum and sound of trumpets,—all this is told in a manner worthy of a great poet.

As a satirist and pamphleteer, also, Fischart shows the fibre of true genius. His *Ehezuchtbüchlein* (1578), one of the most wholesome books on marriage ever written; his *Bienenkorb des heiligen Römischen Immenschwarms* (1579), a violent satire of popery; his *Jesuiterhütlein* (1580),[51] a formidable arraignment of Jesuitic doctrines; his paraphrase of Rabelais's *Gargantua* (1575), are marvels of strong, virile, sonorous diction, profoundly original and inexhaustible in its vocabulary. There is an exuberance and opulence in his style that reminds one of the superabundant wealth of German Renaissance architecture, the climax of which did indeed coincide with the best years of his manhood. And there is an invincible rectitude of purpose, a fulness of human understanding, a keenness of wit, and a raciness of satire in his lines, which place him as a moral teacher directly by the side of Luther and the Humanists.

Yet, in spite of all this, who can help feeling that even Fischart is the representative of a time of decay? He en-

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[51] The *Ehezuchtbüchlein DNL.* XVIII, 3, *p.* 115 ff. The *Jesuiterhütlein ib.* 1, *p.* 227 ff.

tirely lacks that mastery over himself which is indispensable to the true artist. He does not know how to select; he wants to say all; he bewilders us with a mass of detail; hardly ever does he afford unalloyed and simple enjoyment. It is instructive to note the difference between the original *Gargantua* of Rabelais and Fischart's imitation, the monstrous title of which[52] gives a true index of its character. Where Rabelais is grotesque, Fischart is absurd. Where Rabelais draws with a pencil, Fischart paints with a broom. Where the Frenchman has one illustration, the German has ten.[53] A single book of the original is in the copy puffed up into a whole volume. And thus, with all its wealth of satire and invective, this novel has come to be a striking example of realism breaking down under its own weight.

His lack of form.

Had Fischart lived in an age of new ideas his genius would have unfolded and taken wings. Alas for us that his lot was cast in the time that followed the failure of the religious Reformation! Compelled to witness the decline of national greatness and independence; placed in a public

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[52] The title of Rabelais's work is: *La vie tres horrificque du Grand Gargantua pere de Pantagruel; livre plein de Pantagruelisme.* Of this Fischart makes the following: *Affentheurlich Naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung von Thaten und Rhaten der vor kurtzen langen und je weilen Vollenwolbeschreiten Helden und Herren Grandgoschier Gorgellantua und dess dess Eiteldurstlichen Durchdurstlechtigen Fürsten Pantagruel von Durstwelten, Königen in Utopien, Jederwelt Nullatenenten und Nienenreich, Soldan der Neuen Kannarien, Fäumlappen, Dipsoder, Dürstling und Oudissen Inseln: auch grossfürsten im Finsterstall und Nubel Nibel Nebelland, Erbvögt auf Nichllburg, und Niderherren zu Nullibingen, Nullenstein und Niergendheym,* etc. *NddLw. nr.* 65, *p.* 1.

[53] Compare *Geschichtklitterung c.* 8 (*l. c. p.* 123 ff.) with *Gargantua* I, 5 (*Œuvres de Rabelais* ed. P. Favre I, *p.* 52 ff.). A detailed comparison of the two works in L. Ganghofer, *Johann Fischart u. s. Verdeutschung des Rabelais p.* 9 ff., who however is prejudiced in favour of Fischart.

life that afforded room only for theological squabbles and party hatred; hearing in the distance the approaching thunder of the Thirty Years' War,[54] he lost the native elasticity of his soul. In one of his poems[55] he compares Germany to a young captured eagle: his ancestors lived as kings of the air in the free mountain clefts, but he sits drearily chained to his perch and must catch what his master wills. This image may be applied to Fischart himself. He, too, was born to soar into the free air of the ideal; he, too, was condemned to flutter wearily over the sterile ground of actuality.

The Faust-book of 1587.

And here we take leave of this wonderful and incomprehensible sixteenth century. If it were possible to sum up the experience of several generations in the life of a single individual, we should say: the sixteenth century is like that mysterious, heroic figure, which owed its legendary existence to this very age of reaction against the freedom of the early Reformation, the "famous necromancer" Dr. Johann Faust. The sixteenth century, like the legendary Faust, had thrown away the wisdom of former ages, like him it had tried to open a new path towards the higher realms of life, like him it found itself powerless to work out its own salvation. The spirit of the Faust-book of 1587[56] is altogether theological. Faust is represented as a godless rebel, his pact with the devil is devoid of higher motives, his death is surrounded by all the horrors of hell. The book transports us into a world in

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[54] Cf. the prophecy in *c.* 57 of the *Geschichtklitterung, l. c. p.* 453 ff.

[55] *Ernstl. Ermahnung an d. lieben Teutschen;* Goedeke, *Elf Bücher deutscher Dichtung* I, 175.

[56] *NddLw. nr.* 7 and 8. Cf. Erich Schmidt, *Charakteristiken p.* 1 ff.—It is worthy of note that in the very decades in which the Faust-legend spread throughout Germany and beyond, Johann Kepler, the intellectual successor of Copernicus, had to fight his way against both Lutheran and Jesuit fanaticism. Cf. *Allg. D. Biogr.* XV, 603 ff.

which the Copernican system has no place ; it is a warning against free thought and human aspiration ; it is the autobiography of an age which has lost faith in itself.

Let us be thankful that the central truth, which, in spite of all transient veiling, the era of the Reformation stood for, has at last prevailed. What the men of the sixteenth century were not able to accomplish has been fulfilled in our own time. The classic poets and thinkers of the eighteenth century took up the work where Luther and his contemporaries had left it, and led us into that realm of universal brotherhood and humanity which the great religious reformer saw from afar, but was not allowed to enter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ABSOLUTISM, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN LIFE.

(From the Beginning of the Seventeenth to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century.)

1. The Recovery from the Thirty Years' War.

If it is true that for nations as well as individuals every moment of existence is at once a decay and a growth, this is pre-eminently true of the condition of the German people in the seventeenth century.

Elements of modern life in seventeenth-century absolutism.

When the Thirty Years' War had ended by reducing the German empire to its atoms, no hope of religious or political liberty seemed to be left. Nowhere and at no period in modern history has despotism assumed such an absurd and hideous form as in the numberless petty principalities which at the time of the peace of Westphalia (1648) were the last remnants of what had been the dominant power of Europe. Municipal privileges had been trampled down; not a trace of rural autonomy remained; Luther's principle of religious self-determination had been converted into an absolute power of the princes to determine the religious belief of their subjects. As an embodiment of national traditions and national ideals Germany was dead.

Out of the midst of this utter desolation modern German life has sprung. From under the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire grew up that state which, through unflinching adherence to the principle of public welfare and under the stern discipline of a dynasty unrivalled in shrewdness,

tenacity of purpose, and devotion to duty, finally became the foremost factor in the upbuilding of a new, united Germany. From the horrors of religious fanaticism and persecution, which have made the era of Ferdinand II. and Louis XIV. an abomination to thinking men, came forth that movement for religious toleration which has now permeated the whole atmosphere of higher culture. From the dead formalism and shallow correctness which in the first part of the seventeenth century took the place of the unrestrained exuberance of Fischart and his contemporaries, literature, slowly but steadily, rose to a recognition of its eternal tasks, until at last it acquired that lofty freedom and transcendent beauty which have made the great German poets of the eighteenth century the noblest spiritual leaders of the modern world.

Modest, indeed, and laborious were the beginnings of this upward course. He would have preached to unbelieving ears who, about the year 1650, should have prophesied that the reorganization and future greatness of the German state was to be wrought out under the leadership of what was then the little electorate of Brandenburg. In no part of the empire had the ravages of the Thirty Years' War been more disastrous. Berlin, the capital, had only 300 citizens left; the population of the whole state amounted to probably less than a million inhabitants. Life to most of them was only a struggle to maintain a bare, joyless existence. Nor was the governmental absolutism less harsh here than anywhere else. There have been no more unrelenting autocrats than the Hohenzollern princes. With an iron hand the Great Elector (1640–88) put down whatever of municipal freedom there was left within his dominions; with the brutality of a barbarian his grandson, Frederick William I. (1713–40), made sport of citizens' rights in order to exalt his army. It is indeed no wonder that the name of Prussia was an object of hatred and fear all over Germany. And yet, here

The political reconstruction. The rise of Prussia.

lay the origins of modern constitutional life.[1] The old empire with its unwieldy mass of feeble sovereignties was not only, as Pufendorf, the greatest publicist of the seventeenth century, declared, a monster; it was a dying monster, too. If there was to be any form of a German state hereafter, what was left but for some healthy limb of this monster to cut loose from the dying body, and to try life at its own peril? This it is what the Prussian monarchy undertook to do; it could not have succeeded if it had not begun by brushing away the remnants of feudal exemption within its borders, by centralizing its own forces, by subordinating all class distinctions and privileges to the one principle of public usefulness. Public service has always been proclaimed by the Prussian kings as the fundamental obligation laid upon them by their hereditary dignity, and in all decisive moments of its history the Prussian people has proved its loyalty to this principle. It is this that has made the Prussia of to-day.

The intellectual reconstruction, also, like the political, had to be made from the very foundations. Here, too, an empty, sterile dogmatism had forced itself into authority. Witch-burning and inquisition had undermined the very foundations of a true religious life. Both the Protestant and the Catholic church had become machines as lifeless and out of date as the Holy Roman Empire itself. If it had not been for a small band of independent men who, in the midst of this uni-

The intellectual reconstruction.

[1] Cf. for this and the following: H. v. Zwiedineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Gesch. i. Zeitraum d. Gründg d. preuss. Königtums* I, 32 ff. K. F. Hanser, *Deutschl. nach d. 30jähr. Kriege p.* 117 ff. Von Inama-Sternegg, *D. volkswirthschaftl. Folgen d. 30jähr. Krieges, Hist. Taschenb.* IV, 5, 1 ff. K. Biedermann, *Deutschlands trübste Zeit, p.* 18 ff. Lévy-Bruhl, *l'Allemagne depuis Leibniz, p.* 8 ff.—Pufendorf's remark in the pseudon. pamphlet Severini de Monzambano *De statu imp. Germ.*, Genev. 1667, VI, 9: Nihil aliud ergo restat quam ut dicamus, Germaniam esse irregulare aliquod corpus et monstro simile.

versal gloom, kept alive the spark of individual thought and feeling, the cause of spiritual culture might forever have been lost. Two movements, both of them taking up the task of the religious Reformation of the sixteenth century, both of them pointing forward to the victory of intellectual freedom in the eighteenth, were the outcome of this individualistic revival: Pietism and Rationalism.

Pietism. Spener and Francke.

The Pietistic movement is bound up with the names of Jacob Spener (1635–1705) and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). About the same time, when in France the Jansenists protested against the rigid exclusiveness of Jesuitic morality, when William Penn and his friends carried the gospel of the brotherhood of Christ to the banks of the Delaware, these men and their disciples tried to quicken religious feeling in Protestant Germany.[2] Their ideas were not new. They only repeated what Luther had taught: the inanity of ecclesiastical formalism, the need of inner regeneration, the priesthood of all believers. They entirely lacked the heroic stature of the men of the sixteenth century. Their efforts were not directed toward arousing the people as a

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[2] It seems practically unknown that the Pietistic movement, and especially the great philanthropic and educational enterprises of Francke, aroused the keenest interest in one of the most remarkable Americans of his time: Cotton Mather. For several years Mather maintained a correspondence both with Francke himself and with his followers in England; and in 1715, avowedly on the basis of information acquired in this manner, he published a little pamphlet entitled *Nuncia Bona e Terra Longinqua: A Brief Account of Some Good and Great Things Adoing for the Kingdom of God in the Midst of Europe* (Boston, S. Gerrish), in which he gave a succinct but accurate description of the work done at the famous orphan-asylum and the other institutions founded by Francke at Halle. Of the spirit which pervades this description the following words are an index (*p.* 9): "The World begins to feel a Warmth from the Fire of God which thus flames in the Heart of Germany, beginning to extend into many Regions; the whole World will ere long be sensible of it!"

whole; they were content to save individual souls, and to gather about them the devout and the lowly. There is a touch of self-complacent sentimentality in them which, when the movement had gained ground and become outwardly successful, soon turned into a new form of orthodox conventionalism. But with all these shortcomings, it cannot be denied that upon a country blighted by the drought of dogmatic dissensions the Pietistic message of love and godliness fell like rain from heaven. Without it the seed of religious toleration, which was sown by the Rationalistic philosophy, would have found a less susceptible soil.

Rationalism. Leibniz.

German Rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a part of that larger movement which in England began with Bacon, in France with Descartes. It was an attempt to carry out in a systematic manner, and with the help of natural science, what the Humanists had undertaken in a popular way and from the literary point of view,—a critical examination of the outer and the inner world before the supreme tribunal of reason. In England, and later on in France, this inquiry led to a view of life which is best characterized by Locke's basing all knowledge upon sense impressions, by Hume's dissecting the idea of causation, and by the moral and intellectual scepticism of Bayle, Voltaire, and the Encyclopædists. In Germany, on the other hand, there sprang from it the optimistic idealism of Leibniz (1646–1716), which, systematized by Wolff (1679–1754), and popularized by a host of minor philosophers, was to be the

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[3] A more practical turn this movement took in the radical utilitarianism of Christian Thomasius (1655–1728), the founder of the first German literary periodical in German (the so-called *Monatsgespräche*, since 1688), the untiring advocate of popular speech and commonsense even in matters pertaining to scholarly research (*Discours, welcher Gestalt man denen Franzosen im gemeinen Leben u. Wandel nachahmen soll*, 1687). Cf. J. Minor, *Chr. Thomasius, Vierteljahrschr. f. Littgesch.* I, 1 ff.

prevailing form of thought in the German universities of the eighteenth century. While Descartes, Locke, and even Spinoza look at the world as a huge mechanism in which there is little room left for spontaneous activity and self-assertion, Leibniz considers it as an aggregate of an infinite multitude of independent intellectual forces. There is mind in everything. The body is nothing but mind contracted into a form: "Omne corpus est mens momentanea."[4] Between plant, animal, and man there is a difference of degree only, not of quality. The whole world is engaged in a process of continual change, transition, perfection. There is an unbroken line of development from the sleeping life of a seed to the free consciousness of a full-grown man; from the narrow, gloomy egotism of the savage to the broad, enlightened charity of the sage. God is the supreme wisdom and the supreme love. From an infinite number of possible worlds he has chosen the world that is as the best. He has created it, and is therefore outside of it, but he has constituted it in such a manner that it needs no guidance except through its own intrinsic laws. He has so arranged it that all individual forces work together in even measure and for a common end, that evil itself is only a less perfect good. An admiring insight into this harmony of the universe is man's highest happiness and virtue. It is happiness, because it gives us trust in the reasonableness of things, and makes us accept all that may befall us, pain no less than pleasure, as the dispensation of a divine Providence. It is virtue, because it helps us to overcome all littleness, puts before us the ideal of a complete existence, and teaches us, through self-perfection, to take part in the betterment of the race.

It is hard to overestimate the services which Leibniz has rendered to modern culture. He stands midway between Luther and Goethe. He first reduced to philosophic reasoning

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[4] Cf. E. Zeller, *Gesch. d. d. Philosophie p.* 89.

the individualistic view of the universe which had been at the bottom of the Reformation movement, and which was to find its fullest expression in the classic epoch of eighteenth-century literature. In a time of national degradation and misery, his philosophy offered shelter to the higher life, and kept awake the hope of an ultimate resurrection of the German people.

2. Pseudo-classicism.

We have considered some of the political and intellectual tendencies which were destined ultimately to break up the absolutism of the seventeenth century. Were similar forces at work in the literature of the period?

Here, no less than in all other domains of life, the luxurious freedom of the sixteenth century had since the beginning of the seventeenth been superseded by the absolutism of narrow conventionalities. All the poems, dramas, satires, pamphlets, which we thus far have been considering, were written because their authors had something to say, because they had a mission to fulfill, because they could not help giving utterance to thoughts, longings, passions which came from and flowed back to the national heart. It was reserved for the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century to produce a literature which was completely out of touch with national feeling, which had not a single idea to express, which existed solely for the purpose of putting together high-sounding words,—a meaningless pastime for impotent and arbitrary princelings, idle courtiers, and learned pedants. Here again Germany stood not alone. Just as the political and social life of the seventeenth century all over Europe was hemmed in by the prejudices and assumptions of a self-sufficient, frivolous, and despotic aristocracy, so European literature during this period was held in the bondage of a set of arbitrary rules and dictates,

Absolutism in literature.

which, strangely enough, had been derived from the very same source—the great writers of ancient Greece and Rome—from which during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had sprung the freedom and fervour of the Renaissance. But just as the political despotism of the seventeenth century in no country of Europe was so completely deprived of even the last remnant of dignity and self-respect as in Germany, so, also, did pseudo-classic literature in no other country reach the same depth of contemptibleness and absurdity as here.

Opitz and Gottsched.

Two men who were the dictators of literary taste in Germany, the one during the larger part of the seventeenth, the other during the first part of the eighteenth century, may be considered as the most complete types and the most trustworthy interpreters of this school of inanity and pretension: Opitz (1597–1639) and Gottsched (1700–66). Both men had undoubtedly the cause of German literature at heart. Opitz through his connections among the nobility, Gottsched through the dignity of his Leipzig professorship, helped to raise the social standing of authors as a class. Both worked to the best of their ability for a purification of the German language, for the establishment of a normal standard of literary correctness. And although Opitz, by advocating the imitation of the French writers of his time, put German poetry to the rack of the Alexandrine verse, while Gottsched, by adopting the same policy for his own time, forced the German drama into the strait-jacket of the "three unities," yet it is hard to see how, without the discipline afforded by the attempt to reproduce foreign models, or without the chastening influence of the refined elegance of French versification and composition, German literature could have attained even to the small degree of formal respectability which in those days had come to be considered as the supreme test of poetic genius.

But if we turn to the opinions which these men held

about the nature and the office of poetry, if we try to formulate the ideals of life which prompted their æsthetic views, it is indeed as though we saw an impersonation of all the misery and degradation which was the lot of the German people from the failure of the Reformation to the time of Frederick the Great,—as though we saw the sad figure of German Poetry herself, bereft of her mind by the insults and persecutions heaped upon her, making an empty sport of her own glorious past.

Their literary ideals.

Opitz laid down the laws of poetry in the little *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey*, which appeared in 1624. Gottsched propounded his views about the subject chiefly in the voluminous *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen*, which appeared about a hundred years later, in 1730. Until Lessing's time the theories expressed in these books had, in the minds of the vast majority of those who aspired to be poets, the vitality and infallible authority of revealed truths. And yet it is safe to say that never has there been written a treatise about poetry that was further removed than either of these two books from even the vaguest poetical understanding.

To put it plainly,—poetry is to both these men primarily a means of currying favour with the great. At the beginning as well as the end of his essay Opitz frankly admits that what he has most at heart is the good-will and friendship of men of birth and station.[6] And Gottsched, in dedicating his book to certain courtiers of that most despicable of all the

Literature a slave of aristocratic vanity.

[6] *NddLw. nr.* 1, *p.* 8. 58.—For the literature on Opitz cf. *GG.* § 179. K. Borinski, *D. Poetik d. Renaiss. i. Dtschld.* About Opitz's followers and the term 'Erste schlesische Schule' Koberstein, *Gesch. d. d. Natlitt.*[5] II, 120 ff. About the 'Sprachgesellschaften' of the seventeenth century *ib.* 27 ff. *GG.* § 177. About Opitz's earlier contemporary and literary forerunner G. R. Weckherlin (1584–1653) cf. *GG.* § 178, 12. An elaboration of Opitz's theories in G. Harsdörfer's

petty tyrants of the time, Augustus the Strong of Saxony and Poland, pleads guilty to this same desire with such naïve candour, not to say unblushing servility, that comment on his words is superfluous.

"In the midst of the most important state transactions," he says,[6] "through which your most honourable excellencies and lordships in the service of our most gracious king are helping to further the welfare of these lands" [he probably refers to the carnivals, hunting-parties, and water-promenades through which the Dresden court of that time has acquired such a sad notoriety], "I make bold to put before your eyes a book dealing with poetry, nay, to place your most high names upon its front pages. It has never been a matter of indifference to the great whether their bodily forms were portrayed satisfactorily or otherwise; and we find in history some princes who were unwilling to be painted except by the very best artists of their time. What the art of painting accomplishes with regard to the body, the art of poetry, as a much more perfect species of painting, accomplishes with regard to the qualities of mind and heart. Wherefore it is a wonder that great lords should not have long ago forbidden all unskilled or even mediocre poets, with their gross brushes, to attempt a delineation of their virtues and deeds, which, by right, ought to be executed only by the most rare pencils. This book, which I have the honour of dedicating to your most noble and gracious lordships, contains among other things those rules which must be observed by the

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Poetischer Trichter, die deutsche Dicht- u. Reimkunst, in 6 *Stunden einzugiessen* (1647); Koberstein *l. c.* 52.

[6] The dedicatory letter is addressed to "Johann Adolph von Loos, Sr. Königl. Maj. in Pohlen und Churfl. Durchl. zu Sachsen Hochbetrauten wircklich geheimten Rathe und Obersten Stallmeistern" and to "Christian von Loos, Sr. Königl. Maj. etc. Hochansehnlichen Cammerherrn, Hofrathe und geheimtem Referendario."—It is hardly necessary to add that the above quotation is given in full, not to throw particular blame upon Gottsched personally, but to illustrate the spirit of the time. Such performances as this were at that time the most common way for aspiring authors to advertise themselves. For Gottsched's services as literary historian and linguist cf. M. Bernays, *Gottsched* in *Allg. D. Biogr.* IX, 497 ff. Erich Schmidt, *Lessing* I, 410 ff.—Gottsched's *Sterbender Cato DNL.* XLII, 55 ff.

authors of laudatory poems, and consequently also by those who in the future will sing your most high praise. The more exalted the qualities are through which your lordships have won the favour of a great monarch and the respect of a large court, and the wider, therefore, the field which here opens itself to a poet, the more reprehensible would his work be if in such a worthy task he failed and, as it were, desecrated such a noble praise from lack of knowledge or ability.—Since, then, it is one of the chief aims of this book to procure for the great of this world suitable heralds of their deeds, it will, I hope, not seem altogether improper if these *Principles of Poetry* are submitted to the judgment of such illustrious connoisseurs as you, who cannot be indifferent as to what hands shall transmit their portraits to posterity. And although I find myself not worthy to perpetuate the names of your most illustrious lordships and excellencies in poems of my own, you will perhaps nevertheless consider me not entirely unworthy of your mercy, since I have, at least indirectly, tried to add a little to your immortalization. If I should indeed attain the undeserved good fortune of enjoying the patronage of such great statesmen, I shall forever remain your most illustrious, gracious, and noble lordships' and excellencies' most devoted and obedient servant."

Poetry a play with empty forms.

It is hardly necessary to go into the details of a theory which was prompted by such sentiments as these. Neither Opitz nor Gottsched was in the least concerned with any question touching the true essence and inner motive of poetic production. Poetry was to them simply a part of rhetoric, a kind of ornate prose; the office of the critic they saw in suggesting, the office of the poet in applying certain tricks and devices conducive to the successful handling of a given subject. Opitz does not even make an attempt to conceal the shallowness of his principles. Two considerations appear to him of paramount importance: first the proper "invention of things," secondly "the correct preparation and decoration of words." What he means by "invention of things" may be gathered from his definition of tragedy and comedy.[1]

[1] *L. c. p.* 22.

"Tragedy . . . seldom permits the introduction of people of humble birth or common deeds, because it deals only with royal decrees, murders, despairs, slaughters of fathers and children, fires, incests, wars and rebellions, lamentations, outcries, sighs, and the like. Comedy has to do with ordinary matters and persons; it speaks of weddings, banquets, games, tricks and knaveries of servingmen, bragging foot-soldiers, love affairs, frivolity of youth, avarice of old age, match-making, and such things which daily occur among the common people."

What is meant by the proper "decoration of words" may be learned from his remarks about the "weight and dignity of poetical speech."[8]

"Concerning the weight and dignity of poetical speech," he says, "it consists in tropes and figures, by which we make a certain word assume a different meaning from its real one. To dwell here on the division, qualities, and accessories of these figures, I deem unnecessary, because in this respect we can learn everything from the example of the Latin writers. Only this I will say, that it is of the highest importance that we should try to borrow from them and the Greeks the use of epithets; in which we Germans thus far have been extremely lacking. For they give to poetical pieces such a splendour that Stesichorus has been considered the most graceful of poets because he knew how to utilize epithets most fittingly.—In poems of a low order common and insignificant people are introduced; as in comedies and bucolics. These people of course are made to speak in a simple and ordinary manner. But in the higher order of poetry, where the interest turns on gods, heroes, kings, princes, cities, and the like, one must bring in high-sounding, forcible, and spirited language, and call a thing not only by its name, but paraphrase it with specious and magnificent words."

Gottsched, in some respects, represents a more advanced stage of criticism than Opitz. He had the benefit of having before his eyes the classic French literature of the time of Louis XIV., while Opitz's view had been confined to Ronsard and his contemporaries. As a disciple of Horace and Boileau he insisted, or at least professed to insist, upon

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[8] *L. c. p.* 32 ff.

the imitation of nature as the principal form of poetic expression. As an adherent of the Wolffian philosophy, he tried to assign to poetry its place among the moral agencies of the world. And yet, from the appreciation of true artistic feeling and power he was still more hopelessly debarred than his less systematic predecessor. What he most admired in classic French literature was, not the fire and passion which, after all, underlay its outward elegance and regularity, but this elegance and regularity itself. What he was pleased to call imitation of nature was, as a matter of fact, a pedantic exclusion of everything not commonplace. What he considered as the moral aim of poetry was in reality the cultivation of a petty, servile, bloodless, and heartless *savoir vivre*, such as became a generation which submitted to the rule of the powdered wig and padded calves. A single quotation, from the fourth chapter of his *Critische Dichtkunst*,[9] will illustrate sufficiently the absolute barrenness of his mind in problems concerning the true meaning of poetry.

"How ought one to proceed," he asks, apparently without any sense of the ludicrous resemblance of this question to the language of a cook-book, "how ought one to proceed if he is of a mind to make a poem or to work out a plot?" And his answer is as follows: "At the outset select an instructive moral lesson which is to form the basis of the whole poem, in accordance with the intentions which you wish to follow out. Next invent the general lines of an event in which there occurs an action which most palpably demonstrates the chosen lesson. Now there arises the question, what use you want to make of this invention; whether you wish to turn it into a fable, a comedy, a tragedy, or an epic. Everything in this respect depends on the names which you give to the persons who are to appear in it. In a fable the names must be of animals. If you wish to make a comedy of your subject, the persons must be citizens; for heroes and princes belong in a tragedy. Tragedy is distinguished from comedy only in this, that, instead of laughter, it tries to

[9] Ed. of 1730, *p.* 133 ff. In the condensation of these pages I have followed Hettner, *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* i. 18. *Jhdt.* I, 364.

arouse wonder, terror, and pity; therefore, it usually concerns itself with men of birth only, who are conspicuous by their rank, name, and appearance. In an epic, which is the masterpiece of all poetry, the persons must be the most impressive in the world, kings, heroes, and great statesmen, and everything in it must sound majestic, strange, and wonderful."

The literature corresponding to the pseudo-classic theory.

It would have been a waste of time to lose a single word upon these puerile and unworthy trifles if the theories of Opitz and Gottsched had been only the opinions of individuals. What gives to them their great, though melancholy, importance is the fact that they were the expression of the prevailing literary taste throughout the seventeenth and the first decades of the eighteenth century. The same dead formalism, the same worship of the phrase, the same slavish subservience to an arbitrary fashion, the same utter lack of manliness, originality, and inspiration we find in all the favourite forms of literature throughout this period. We find it in the hollow verbosity of the arcadian and courtly novel, represented by such works as Philip von Zesen's *Adriatic Rosamond* (1645); Buchholz's *Pleasant Romance of the Christian Royal Princes Herculiscus and Herculadisla and their Princely Company* (1659); Ziegler's *The Asiatic Banise, or Bloody but Courageous Pegu, Based on Historic Truth but Covered with the Veil of a Pleasing Story of Heroic Love-Adventure* (1688); Lohenstein's *The Magnanimous General Arminius, with his Illustrious Thusnelda, Held up to the German Nobility as an Honourable Example and for Praiseworthy Emulation* (1689); and a host of others. We find it in the vapid pomposity of the drama: the blood-curdling, bombastic tragedies of Andreas Gryphius (1616–64) and his contemporaries; the boisterous, spectacular *Haupt- und Staatsactionen* from the beginning of the eighteenth century; the tame declamatory exercises of the academic school, of which Gottsched himself was the head. We find it lastly in lyric and descriptive poetry:

from Opitz's own pedantic odes, pastoral and didactic reflections, through Hoffmannswaldau's (1618–79) glittering and frivolous dallying with unreal sentiments, down to the unspeakable platitudes of such courtlings as Besser (1654–1729) and König (1688–1744), whose elaborations are indeed on a plane with a famous political controversy of their time, to wit: whether certain of the princely delegates to the German Diet should enjoy the privilege of having their chairs upholstered in red, and whether these chairs should be allowed on the same carpet with that of the imperial commissioner.[10] It is the same spirit as that which gave rise to the meaningless splendour of rococo architecture; which degraded the cathedrals into curiosity-shops filled with tinsel, tortuous columns, and unholy paintings; which populated royal parks and galleries with the statues of high-born nonentities and impossible allegories; which stamped its aristocratic scrolls and flourishes even upon the household goods of the humble citizen.

Difference between the aristocracy of the twelfth and that of the seventeenth century.

To sum up. Again, as in the twelfth century, literature had become the handmaid of a small fraction of the people; again it had become bound up with the interests of aristocratic class rule. But what a difference between the aristocracy of the twelfth and that of the seventeenth century! The knighthood of the time of Frederick Barbarossa had obtained its leading position by right of political ser-

[10] Cf. J. S. Pütter, *Histor. Entwickelung der heut. deutschen Staatsverf.* (1786) II, 262 ff. K. Biedermann, *Deutschlands trübste Zeit p.* 50.—For the courtly and arcadian novel cf. F. Bobertag, *Gesch. d. Romans in Deutschld* II, 1, 51 ff. Bobertag, *Zweite schles. Schule, DNL.* XXXVII. For the courtly drama Koberstein *l. c.* II, 269 ff. L. G. Wysocki, *A. Gryphius et la tragédie Allemande au XVII^e siècle. DNL.* XXIX (Gryphius). XXXVI, 108 ff. (Zweite schles. Schule). For the courtly lyrics M. v. Waldberg, *Die galante Lyrik,* and *Die deutsche Renaissancelyrik.* T. S. Perry, *From Opitz to Lessing p.* 31 ff. Gödeke, *Elf Bücher d. Dichtg* I, *book* 2 and 4. *DNL.* XXVII (Opitz and his followers). XXXVI, 1 ff. 334 ff. (Zweite

vice; chivalric literature embodied the finest culture and the highest aspirations of the age. The so-called nobility which flocked to the court of Augustus the Strong and other centres of princely dissipation owed its predominance solely to the helpless condition of a people whose material prosperity this same nobility had ruined and whose spiritual hopes it had crushed. Is it a wonder that the *belles-lettres* which corresponded to this state of things were the most depraved and abject mockery that has ever usurped the name of literature?

3. The Individualistic Undercurrent in Seventeenth-century Literature.

Literary opposition to absolutism.

It is comforting and inspiring to observe how even in this bondage of despicable conventions German literature retained something of its native independence and sturdiness, how it gradually wrenched itself out of the deadly enclosure of corruption and depravity, and ultimately became the freest and most enlightened spiritual force of the world. Let us follow some of the phases of this literary undercurrent, let us see how it gathered below the icy crust of rule and scholasticism, how it grew and broadened, and finally burst to the surface with the irresistible power of genius and life.

In speaking of the political, religious, and philosophical revivals of the seventeenth century, we observed that they were only belated results of the great sixteenth-century revolution. The same must be said of the literary revival. And it must be added that the manner in which these revivals came about was in all cases essentially the same. The sixteenth century had been on the point of establishing

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schles. Schule). On the influence of Guarini, Marino, and other Italian writers upon this whole literature cf. Borinski, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. seit d. Ausg. d. MA. p.* 112 f. Koberstein *l. c.* 104 f. 142.

national unity and religious and intellectual liberty through a grand popular uprising. Now that this popular uprising had been definitely crushed, there was no hope for the ultimate victory of its principles left except in individual effort, except in the determination of single men to carry on the work of a nobler past even under the most discouraging conditions and in the face of appalling difficulties. This it was which the Great Elector, Leibniz, Spener did, each in his own way. This it was which a number of writers, whom we now shall proceed to consider, at least tried to do. This is the manner in which modern culture has fought its way to maturity.

The writers who represent this upward tendency may be divided into three groups: those who are chiefly concerned with religious matters, those whose attention is chiefly directed toward social conditions, those who depict chiefly their own individual emotions. The first group consists of Protestant and Catholic hymn-writers; the second embraces novelists, satirists, and playwrights; the third, representatives of worldly lyrics and descriptive poetry.

Religious lyrics.

There is a marked contrast between the hymns of the sixteenth and those of the seventeenth century. The hymns of Luther and his contemporaries were battle-songs; they were born out of the conflict of the old religious world and the new; they were outcrys of a whole people struggling to revolutionize its spiritual existence. The hymns of the seventeenth century are the outpourings of individual souls longing for peace and reconciliation, expressions of trust in the guidance of a divine Providence, offerings of prayer and praise for protection in distress. And, what is most remarkable, there is hardly an allusion in them to the warfare between Protestantism and Catholicism,—an unmistakable sign of the growth of religious toleration even under the surface of official dogmatism and sectarianism.

Among the large number of Protestant hymn-writers, the

most representative are Paul Fleming (1609–40) and Paul Gerhardt (1606–76). Paul Fleming, an ambitious youth who worked his way from the modest surroundings of his father's country parsonage into the service of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and who, after having taken part in diplomatic missions to Russia and Persia, died at the threshold of full manhood, was far from being in opposition to Opitz and his school. On the contrary, he admired Opitz as the German Pindar and Homer [11]; he considered himself his pupil; he tried to vie with him in artificial odes and sonnets, full of classical allusions and allegories; and when a few days before his own death, in an epitaph written for his grave, he claimed immortality for himself, there is little doubt that he based this claim upon those conventional and lifeless productions of the Opitzian kind, which now are deservedly forgotten. Fleming's real claim to immortality, however, rests on the fact that in sacred song at least, at times also in songs of love and home, he broke away, one might say in spite of himself, from his own artificial standards. It is as though in the presence of his Creator the ambitions and passions of his worldly career dwindled into nothing. For the deepest feeling, for the most momentous relations of life, he finds the simplest and most artless language. In starting on his Russian journey, he commends himself to God with all his own [12]:

Fleming.

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[11] Cf. the sonnet *Ueber Herrn Martin Opitzen auf Boberfeld sein Ableben*, *DNL.* XXVIII, 96.—In worldly lyrics a similar falling away from the canon of Opitzian theories, in spite of unbounded admiration for Opitz, is seen in Simon Dach (d. 1659), the poet of *Anke von Tharau ; DNL.* XXX, 106.

[12] *Nach des VI. Psalmens Weise*, *DNL.* XXVIII, 27 ff.—For German religious lyrics of the sixteenth century cf. Ph. Wackernagel, *D. d. Kirchenlied v. d. ältesten Zeit b. z. Anfg d. 17. Jhdts.*

Ich zieh in ferne Lande
Zu nützen einem Stande
An den er mich bestellt.
Sein Segen wird mir lassen
Was gut und recht ist fassen,
Zu dienen seiner Welt.

Leg ich mich späte nieder,
Erwach ich frühe wieder,
Lieg oder zieh ich fort—
In Schwachheit und in Banden,
Und was mir stosst zu handen,
So tröstet mich sein Wort.

Ihm hab ich mich ergeben,
Zu sterben und zu leben,
So bald er mir gebeut.
Es sey heut oder morgen,
Dafür lass ich ihn sorgen,
Er weiss die rechte Zeit.

Like Walther von der Vogelweide, Fleming is sick of the world. He bids it good-night with all its treasures,[13] he knows that its part is evil; he thanks God for having opened his eyes to the true life; he feels full of heaven; he feels raised above himself, and he defies the evil powers to drag him down again:

Hin, Welt, du Dunst; von itzt an schwing ich mich
Frei, ledig, los, hoch über mich und dich
Und Alles das, was hoch heisst und dir heisset.
Das höchste Gut erfüllet mich mit sich
Macht hoch, macht reich. Ich bin nun nicht mehr ich.
Trutz dem, das mich in mich zurücke reisset!

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[13] *Neuer Vorsatz, l. c.* 92: 'Welt, gute Nacht, mit allem deinem Wesen.'—Similarly Johann Rist (cf. *GG.* § 182) in his *Lob des Hoflebens* (*DNL.* XXVII, 380):

Himmel, dir sey Lob gesungen,
Dass ich der bin, der ich bin,
Auch annoch fein ungezwungen
Leben kann nach meinem Sinn;
Aller Höfe Glantz und Pracht
Sing und sag ich gute Nacht.

If Fleming rose superior to his artistic maxims and prejudices, Paul Gerhardt was borne by a living faith and an imperturbable joyfulness of mind above the prison walls of orthodox righteousness. In reading his poems we forget that he was an uncompromising Lutheran zealot, an irreconcilable foe of Calvinistic heresies. To him the world, as Scherer expresses it, lies in continual sunshine. He is akin to Leibniz in his unfailing optimism. He scorns trouble; distress is to him happiness, darkness is light[14]:

Gerhardt.

Die Welt ist mir ein Lachen
Mit ihrem grossen Zorn;
Sie zürnt, und kann nichts machen,
All Arbeit ist verlorn.
Die Trübsal trübt mir nicht
Mein Herz und Angesicht;
Das Unglück ist mein Glück,
Die Nacht mein Sonnenblick.

From the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, from the sight of fallen castles and destroyed cities, of trampled fields and open graves, he turns away to thank God for the final return of peace and to inspire his people with gratitude for the infinite grace and mercy of the Highest[15]:

Wohlauf und nimm nun wieder
Dein Saitenspiel hervor,
O Deutschland! und sing Lieder
Im hohen vollen Chor.
Erhebe dein Gemüthe
Und danke Gott, und sprich:
Herr, deine Gnad und Güte
Bleibt dennoch ewiglich!

Gerhardt knows that to the children of God all things work together for good. He who rules in heaven, he who

[14] The hymn 'Auf, auf mein Herz mit Freuden'; *Geistl. Lieder* ed. Wackernagel *nr.* 27. Cf. Scherer's *Gesch d. d. Litt. p.* 340.

[15] *Danklied vor die Verkündigung des Friedens*; *DNL.* XXXI, 154 ff.

has ordered the ways of winds and clouds, will find a path for our feet also.[16] To him Gerhardt lifts his face in the morning,[17] into his care he commits himself at night, as the chicken seeks refuge under the wings of the mother hen.[18] The joys of nature are God's gift, the dumb animals sing his praise, all creation is a mighty chorus of thanksgiving, in which the poet cannot help mingling his voice[19]:

Die Lerche schwingt sich in die Luft,
Das Täublein fleucht aus seiner Kluft
Und macht sich in die Wälder,
Die hochbegabte Nachtigal
Ergötzt und füllt mit ihrem Schall
Berg, Hügel, Thal and Felder.

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Ich selbsten kann und mag nicht ruhn,
Des grossen Gottes grosses Thun
Erweckt mir alle Sinnen:
Ich singe mit, wenn alles singt,
Und lasse, was dem Höchsten klingt,
Aus meinem Herzen rinnen.

But more than all else does the death and resurrection of Christ fill Gerhardt with unspeakable joy. In a wonderful apostrophe to Christ's bleeding head,[20] all the more wonderful because it is an adaptation from Bernhard of Clairvaux, he vows faithfulness to his Saviour unto the grave. He knows that his Redeemer liveth, that his own body is not always to be the prey of worms, that he will step into the presence of God transfigured.[21] And his feeling of oneness with his Lord and Master is so vivid and real that he in-

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16 The hymn 'Befiehl du deine Wege'; *ib.* 174.
17 *Morgenlied* 'Wach auf mein Herz und singe'; *ib.* 137.
18 *Abendlied* 'Nun ruhen alle Wälder'; *ib.* 139.
19 *Sommergesang* 'Geh aus mein Herz und suche Freud'; *ib.* 191 ff.
20 *Passionssalve* 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden'; *ib.* 133 ff.
21 The hymn 'Ich weiss dass mein Erlöser lebt'; *Geistl. Lieder* ed. Wackernagel *nr.* 118.

stinctively clothes it in words which remind us of the old popular love-song[22]:

Herr, mein Hirt, Brunn aller Freuden,
Du bist mein,
Ich bin dein,
Niemand kann uns scheiden.
Ich bin dein, weil du dein Leben
Und dein Blut
Mir zu gut
In den Tod gegeben.
Du bist mein, weil ich dich fasse
Und dich nicht,
O mein Licht,
Aus dem Herzen lasse.

Of the two most distinguished among the Catholic hymn-writers of the seventeenth century, Friedrich Spee (1591–1635) and Johann Scheffler (1624–77), the former was a Jesuit, the latter a Franciscan. Spee. But in neither of them is there a trace of that dark fanatic spirit, that abnegation of individual feeling, which so often has been pronounced the inevitable fruit of Romish doctrines. They both share in the morbid taste of their contemporaries for daintiness of language, florid descriptions, and far-fetched comparisons. Spee devotes a poem of twenty stanzas to describing how he and the Echo once in a forest "played ball" with the name of Jesus.[23] Scheffler goes so far as to compare the dying Jesus with a nightingale sitting on the cross and pouring out melodious strains, from which, the poet says, his own soul has derived eternal comfort and bliss.[24] But both Spee and Scheffler are noteworthy examples of the power of true

[22] *Christliches Freudenlied* 'Warum sollt' ich mich denn grämen?' *DNL.* XXXI, 163 ff.—Cf. *supra, p.* 69.

[23] The poem *Die Gespons Jesu spielet im Wald mit einer Echo oder Widerschall;* Goedeke *Elf Bücher d. Dichtg.* I, 249.

[24] The poem *Die Psyche vergleicht ihren Jesum einer Nachtigall; ib.* 429. Similar aberrations in Zinzendorf's Geistl. Lieder (1725).

human feeling to enliven and transfigure even unreal and assumed forms. They are the Minnesingers of sacred song. Spee's strength lies in his keen eye for the beauty of outward things, in the Rhinelander's love for outdoor merriment, in a delicate ear for harmonious sound. His descriptions of nature are not always the worse for being saturated with Renaissance conceptions. When he pictures the proud huntress Diana sporting with the Nymphs of the forest, the Sun filling his quiver with fresh arrows; when he represents the summer winds as noble youths, riding upon clouds,[25] the morning-red as Aurora braiding her purple locks,[26] we are reminded of a Domenichino or a Guido Reni. And all the more deeply are we impressed when in the midst of such a luxuriant apotheosis of earthly splendour he gives vent to his craving for spiritual atonement, and with heart-rending lamentation turns to his beloved Jesus for help[27]:

Ade du schöne Frühlingszeit,
Ihr Felder, Wäld und Wiesen,
Laub, Gras, und Blümlein neu gekleidt,
Mit süssem Tau berisen!
Ihr Wässer klar
Erd, Himmel gar,
Ihr Pfeil der gülden Sonnen!
Nur Pein und Qual
Bei mir zumal
Hat Ueberhand gewonnen.
Ach Jesu, Jesu, treuer Held
Wie kränkest mich so sehre!
Bin je doch harb und harb gequelt;
Ach, nit mich so beschwere!
Ja wiltu sehn
All Pein und Peen

[25] Cf. the *Liebgesang der Gespons Jesu im Anfang der Sommerzeit; ib.* 250.

[26] Cf. the *Ecloga oder Hirtengespräch; ib.* 255.

[27] *Liebgesang der Gespons str.* 11.

Im Augenblick vergangen,
Mein Augen beid
Nur führ zur Weid,
Auf dein so schöne Wangen.

Scheffler drew his inspiration not so much from a delight in the visible world as from a deep conception of the inner unity of all nature. A Protestant by birth, he was led by the writings of Jacob Boehme and other Mystics of his own as well as earlier times into the wider realm of a fantastic Catholicism, very much in the same way in which cardinal Newman was estranged from the rigid formalism of the Anglican church through his craving for a fuller and richer spiritual life. And as Newman confessed that he "was not ever thus"; that there was a time when he "loved to choose and see his path," when he "loved the garish day"; but that now he was willing to be led by the "kindly light amidst the encircling gloom,"—so Scheffler, also, contrasted his former aimless wandering with the serene security of his converted state [28]:

Scheffler.

Ich lief verirrt und war verblendet,
Ich suchte dich und fand dich nicht;
Ich hatte mich von dir gewendet,
Und liebte das geschaffne Licht.
Nun aber ists durch dich geschehn
Dass ich dich hab gesehn.

Erhalte mich auf deinen Stegen
Und lass mich nicht mehr irre gehn;
Lass meinen Fuss in deinen Wegen
Nicht straucheln oder stille stehn:
Erleucht mir Leib und Seele ganz,
Du starker Himmelsglanz.

But Scheffler's innermost life was on a plane raised high above both Protestantism and Catholicism. Like Spinoza, he dwelt in the intuition of a divine universe, in which there

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[28] The hymn 'Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke'; *l. c.* 426.

is no above or below, and no past or present. God was to him as much a part of man as man a part of God; the whole as much a part of the individual as the individual a part of the whole. All life was to him the projection of a single infinite being. In the whole range of literature there is no book in which pantheism has found a more original poetic expression than in the childlike sibylline verses of his *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* (1657).[29]

The rose which blossoms to-day has been blooming in God from all eternity:

Die Rose welche hier dein äussres Auge sieht
Die hat von Ewigkeit in Gott also geblüht.

Man is at the same time a thing and not a thing, a point and a circle:

Ich weiss nicht was ich bin, ich bin nicht was ich weiss,
Ein Ding und nicht ein Ding, ein Stüpfchen und ein Kreis.

The true man is as unchangeable as eternity itself; he becomes what he is and is what he has been:

Ein wesentlicher Mensch ist wie die Ewigkeit
Die unverändert bleibt von aller Aeusserheit.

Ich ward das was ich war, und bin was ich gewesen,
Und werd es ewig sein, wenn Leib und Seel genesen.

God is in the soul as the ocean is in a drop of water:

Sag an, wie geht es zu, wenn in ein Tröpfelein,
In mich, das ganze Meer Gott ganz und gar fleusst ein?

God died in Abel no less than in Christ:

Gott ist nicht's erstemal am Kreuz getödtet worden;
Denn schau! er liess sich ja in Abel schon ermorden.

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[29] Cf. for the following *ib.* 429.

God is the oneness of all things:

> Ein einger Gott und viel, wie stimmt dies überein?
> Gar schöne; weil sie all in einem einer sein.

All the virtues are swallowed up in one, which is justice:

> Schau alle Tugenden, ist ein ohn Unterscheid.
> Wiltu den Namen hörn? sie heisst Gerechtigkeit.

Thus Scheffler, with an astonishing wealth of ever-new applications and similes, goes on repeating in endless variations his one great theme of a divine universe. And he who is able to translate the language of one century into that of another will discover here again, as in so many phenomena of this period, the pulse-beat of our own modern thought and culture.

National importance of the religious song.

There can be hardly a question that no other species of seventeenth-century literature has exerted so healthy an influence upon national life and has helped so much to reawaken a strong and manly sentiment as sacred song. At a time when princely courts had come to be meeting-grounds of vice and frivolity, when the city halls and market-places had ceased to echo with the sounds of popular energy and enterprise, there still remained a refuge for noble imagination in the churches, and from more than one solitary country parsonage there shone forth a light which in due time was to mingle with the dawning of a better day. Only ten years after the death of Paul Gerhardt, two men were born who were to make church music the vehicle of emotions as lofty and exalted as any that ever found expression in poetry and art: Bach and Händel. And these men were both still living when Klopstock, the first great poet of modern German literature, arose to sing the delivery of the human soul from the thraldom of sin, the resurrection of mind, the immortality of the individual.

If the religious song of the seventeenth century is

unmistakably individualistic, the same may be said of what we have called the undercurrent of secular literature of this period. Here, too, we notice a constant and growing opposition to the dictates of arbitrary rule and fashion, a gradual return to nature, a slowly advancing emancipation of individual feeling. None of the men who represent this movement achieved anything that can be called great. Few of them reached beyond mediocrity. The intellectual horizon of most of them was narrow, their language timid, their moral aims philistine. But if we remember that they were part of a people utterly crushed and disorganized, that they had to make a life-long fight against conventionalism and pedantry, we shall find in their efforts more to admire than to criticise.

Secular literature.

In one respect the movement appears to be essentially negative. The further we leave the time of the Thirty Years' War behind, the further we advance toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the more are we struck with the constantly waning influence of public affairs upon literature. But this apparent symptom of decay was in reality a condition, a necessary condition, of the growth of a new society. Since public life more and more came to be a prey of an aristocracy devoid alike of moral dignity and national aspirations, it more and more ceased to arouse in the breast of self-respecting men any feeling except that of anger and indignation. Private morality now came to be the chief concern of life. Freedom and humanity retired into the sanctuary of the heart. Self-observation and self-cultivation took the place of outward activity. And literature, by taking part in this new tendency, by concentrating its attention upon the inner self, by clinging to the idea of a spiritual life independent of external conditions, helped in its part to prepare the minds of the educated for the noble cosmopolitanism of Lessing and his contemporaries. A few hints about this gradual supplanting of public by private ideals

Gradual supplanting of public by private ideals.

will bring our consideration of the literature of this period to a close.

Popular life of the seventeenth century as expressed in literature.

To the very disasters of the Thirty Years' War, with its doleful sequence of popular misery, foreign oppression, and national degradation, German literature owes a number of genuinely patriotic and public-spirited writers, all of whom, however, were in opposition to the strongest and most wide-spread currents of the public taste and conduct of their time.

Logau.

Not even Walther von der Vogelweide inveighed more fervently against political and moral corruption than the noble Friedrich von Logau (1604–55), a man who in a time of sham and servility remained true to himself. In his own idealism Logau finds a standard for judging the false gods of the day. Society as he sees it about him, he describes as a sea in which the weighty and solid goes under, while the light and frivolous is kept afloat.[30] In the midst of contending religious parties, he looks in vain for religion,[31] and in the unctuous piety of official churchdom he detects the note of hypocrisy.[32] Although himself an aristocrat by birth, he inveighs against the immorality of court life, which seems to him a hideous masquerade,[33] and he declines to bend his knee before tinsel potentates and powdered grandees.[34] With scorn and indignation he speaks of militarism, and the ravages inflicted by it upon the peaceful citizen.[35]

"Merry, ye soldiers, merry! The sabre-belts with which your loins are girded have been wrought from the skin of peasants. Your boots, your saddles and pistols you have stolen in knightly fashion

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[30] *Weltgunst; DNL.* XXVIII, 156. [31] *Glauben; ib.* 166.

[32] *Heuchler; Sämmtl. Sinngedichte* ed. Eitner I, 8, 74.

[33] *Hofewerkzeug; ib.* II, 7, 5.

[34] *Poeterey; ib.* I, 5, 3:

Ich biege keine Knie und rücke keine Kappen
Für auffgeputzter Ehr und angestrichner Gunst.

[35] *Anzeigungen des Sieges; ib.* I, 8, 46.

upon the highway. Your horses have been torn from the plough. The last bloody crumbs of bread have been carried away by your camp-followers and courtesans. The whole country is being ruined to lift a handful of riders into the saddle. Merry, ye soldiers, merry!"

He bewails the influx of foreign, especially French, fashions into Germany; for he knows that a people changes its morality together with its garb.[36]

"In olden times Germany was the land of honesty, now it has come to be a lumber-room where other nations store their crimes and vices."[37] "No one is honoured amongst us who knows no French; we disclaim and condemn our very ancestors because they spoke and felt German."[38] "Servants have to wear the livery of their masters; can it, then, be true that France is the mistress and Germany the slave? Fie upon thee, proud Germany, for this shameful bondage."[39]

Moscherosch. Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald.

The same tone of manly independence which gives such a solid ring to Logau's epigrams we hear in the prose satires of his contemporary, Hans Michael Moscherosch (1601–69). But while the lofty idealism of Logau seldom stoops to a detailed representation of actual conditions, it is just here that Moscherosch is strongest. His *Visions of Philander von Sittewald* (1642), although they are in part, at least, adapted from the Spanish,[40] and although they have a large admixture of the fanciful and the fantastic, at the same time give

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[36] *Fremde Tracht; DNL.* XXVIII, 190.

[37] *Deutschland; ib.* 156. [38] *Frantzösische Sprache; ib.* 176.

[39] *Frantzösische Kleidung; ib.* 162.

[40] The *Sueños* of Francisco Gomez de Quevedo (1635), which Moscheroch knew through a French translation by the Sieur de la Geneste.—For the Spanish influence on German literature of the seventeenth century, especially manifest in the so-called *picaresco* novel (Warren, *History of the Novel p.* 284 ff.), cf. Bobertag in the introduction to Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus, DNL.* XXXIII, *p.* xxvi ff. Among the earliest translations from the Spanish is the *Landstörtzer Gusman von Alfarache oder Picaro genannt* by Aegidius Albertinus (1615; the original, by Mateo Aleman, appeared in 1599).

a most realistic picture of the ordinary German life of that age in all its manifold aspects and modifications. And what a life it is that he portrays! What a gigantic Vanity Fair, what an endless variation of the one theme of the radical wickedness of human nature and institutions! In one of the visions, entitled *Children of Hell*, the author is transported to the Inferno, where he finds the chief representatives of contemporary society in the rôle of associates and bondsmen of the devil. In another, called *Ways of the World*, Philander describes his experiences on the great highroad which extends from North America to the Straits of Magellan, from Nova Zembla to New Guinea, from Ormus to Seville, from Greenland to Sumatra, from the Cape of Good Hope to Archangel: the road of hypocrisy. Among other incidents, he meets a funeral procession, a widower with a great crowd of relatives following the body of his wife.[41] Philander takes compassion on the poor man as he drags himself along, his head bowed down, wrapped up in a wide black mantle. "What a blessed woman," he exclaims, "to be mourned so deeply by her dear ones! what a hapless husband to be bereft of such a noble wife!" But he is quickly disenchanted when his companion tells him that what afflicts the widower so deeply is, not the death of his wife, but the large expenses of the funeral and the reflection that she might have died before doctor and apothecary had had a chance of running up such enormous bills; and that, while he is following her to the grave, his imagination is busily engaged with a host of future sweethearts. In still another vision, called *Fashion's Windup*, the spirits of Ariovistus, Arminius, and other heroes of an imaginary Germanic past[42] are conjured up to inveigh against the outlandish and effeminate manners of their depraved descend-

[41] Cf. for the following *DNL.* XXXII, 46 ff.

[42] The identification of things Germanic and Celtic was a common mistake throughout the seventeenth and the larger part of the eighteenth century.

ants. It is Philander himself who appears before this council, and although he prides himself on being a good German, he finds not the least favour in their eyes. They first take offence at his name. "Why," asks King Ariovistus,[43] "if you are a German by birth, have you not a German name? Of what use is a Greek or a Hebrew name in Germany?" "Your Majesty," answers Philander, "such names are common with us." "Common? Yes, common as French vices. Is there no faith left in the hearts of Germans for their fatherland? Have you not been ruined by Roman despotism and perfidy, and yet you crave to be called by names borrowed from your oppressors? Have you lost your self-respect to such a degree that such noble-sounding German names as Erhard, Adelhard, Baldfried, Karl, Kunrath, Degenbrecht, Eitellieb, Gottfried, Sigfried, Theuerdank, and others equally beautiful are despised by you?" Another of the royal company makes fun of Philander's fashionable hat; another takes him by his forelock and exclaims: "Are you a German? and you wear your hair like a Frenchman? Why do you have your hair hanging down over your forehead like a thief?" Another says: "You are a German? Why, then, do you wear that silly Frenchified beard? Your ancestors considered an honest full-grown beard their greatest pride, and you, like the fickle French fools, treat and trim and curl it every month, every week, every day!" "You are a German?" says another, "look at your garments! What manner of doublet is that, what stockings and knee-breeches? Is nothing good enough for you that is made in your own country, you despisers and traitors of your fatherland? Where is the people so fickle, so fastidious, so foolish in bearing as the degenerate Germans of the present day?"

But the most fearful picture of depravity drawn by Moscherosch is the vision entitled *Soldier's Life*, of which it will

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[43] Cf. for the following *DNL. l. c.* 140 ff.

suffice to mention one episode.[44] Philander in his wanderings of an evening passes by a church. As he sees a light in it, he decides to enter and quarter there for the night. Approaching the door, he is suddenly seized by two men who hold pistols to his breast and warn him to be quiet. Then they take him into the church, and there, good God! what a spectacle opens before his eyes! Horses standing in a row along the pews and feeding, soldiers lying around a fire, and by another fire some twenty peasants and citizens huddled together and tied with ropes. Before dawn the whole party breaks up, the soldiers and Philander on horseback, the captives driven along, like cattle, with whips and sabres. In a wilderness amid the mountains a camp is pitched, and now the torturing of the victims begins. A few offer ransoms and escape with blows and kicks; the majority undergo excruciating agonies. One, with both hands tied on his back, has a horsehair drawn through his tongue. Every time that the unfortunate man cries out, his calves are lashed with a cowhide. Another has a rope with many knots wound around his forehead and tightened in the neck with a gag, so that the blood streams from his eyes and nose. And so the story goes on, a most appalling record of cruelty, perhaps with details which offend a refined taste, but with a formidable arraignment of the corruption and villany of the omnipotent soldiery, which does the greatest credit to the author's moral courage and patriotism.

By the side of Logau and Moscherosch, the greatest epigrammatist and the greatest satirist of the seventeenth century,[45] stands Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen

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[44] *DNL. l. c.* 257 ff.

[45] Among other satirical writings of the seventeenth century the most remarkable are Johann Lauremberg's Low-German *Schertzgedichte* (1652), reprinted *NddLw. nr.* 17; Balthasar Schupp's *Freund in der Noth* (1657), *ib. nr.* 9; Abraham a S. Clara's *Judas der*

(1625–76), its greatest novelist, he, too, radically opposed to the fashionable vices and follies of the ruling aristocracy. The whole drift of his principal work, the famous *Simplicius Simplicissimus* (1668), is to show the vanity and perverseness of the existing social order. Gervinus, and after him Scherer, have drawn a parallel between Simplicissimus and Parzival which is indeed striking. Like Parzival, Simplicissimus loses his parents at an early age; like him he is reared in the wilderness; like him he enters the world a dreamy, childish youth; like him he loses his better self in a life of reckless adventure; like him he is taught through his very mistakes and misfortunes a fuller view of God and mankind, and ends, contented with his lot, with soul at peace. But there is one radical difference between Wolfram's work and that of Grimmelshausen. Wolfram believed in the ideals of his time, Grimmelshausen despised those of his age. Wolfram's hero participates in the highest and best which chivalrous culture can offer him, and finally attains the crown of perfect knighthood. Grimmelshausen's hero is tossed about in a world of savageness and brutality, and at the end of his career finds salvation only by denouncing and abjuring what had been the chief concern of his life.

Grimmelshausen's Simplicissimus.

A few episodes of this remarkable work will serve to bring out more fully the grim pessimistic spirit with which Grimmelshausen must have looked about him. The opening scene [46] shows a troop of pillaging soldiers breaking into the house of Simplicius's foster-father, a peasant in the Spessart. Doors and windows are smashed, the furniture is battered and burned; with devilish ingenuity the inmates are tortured. one of them has a pail of dung-water poured

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Ertzschelm (1686), *DNL.* XL; Christian Reuter's *Schelmuffsky* (1696), *NddLw. nr.* 57.

[46] *Book* I, *c.* 4; *DNL.* XXXIII, 16 ff.

down his throat; another is roasted in the baking-oven; a third is thrown into hysteric convulsions by having the soles of his feet licked by a goat, as he lies bound. Simplicius escapes and finds refuge with an old hermit in the forest.[47] Being asked his own or his father's name, he cannot give them; as for himself, he says, his mother used to call him boy, or rascal, or scapegallows, and her husband she sometimes called such names as clown, ruffian, drunken hog. When the hermit asks him to say a prayer, he reels off a mock version of the Paternoster, and the story of the destruction of his father's house he begins by saying: "Well, there came some iron men; they were sitting on things as large as oxen except they had no horns." In short, the picture of fiendish rascality which was presented by the first scene is complemented here by the evidence of hopeless ignorance and degradation.

The whole record of Simplicius's life does not differ essentially from this beginning. After the death of the old hermit, in whose fatherly care he spends the next few years, and who finally is discovered to be his real father, he is again turned adrift. Captured by some vagrant soldiers, he is brought to the court of the governor of Hanau. Here a deliberate attempt is made to derange his mind, so as to make him a suitable court fool.[48] He is put through the most loathsome orgies and ordeals. He is torn out of his bed at night, by some servants who are disguised as devils. They blindfold him, dance him up and down through the house, and finally shut him up in the cellar, where for three days they drug him with the strongest drinks. Next, he is taken through an imaginary purgatory and heaven, and finally put into a calf's skin and led about by a rope. Fortunately he had been warned beforehand by a friend, and therefore manages to keep his head in all this satanic nonsense; but nevertheless this experience is another means

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[47] Book I, *c*. 8; *DNL*. XXXIII, 25 ff. [48] *Book* II, *c*. 5 ff.; *ib*. 108 ff.

of poisoning his moral nature, another step in his downward course. There follows the greatest variety of adventures. Again he is captured by some roving Croats; he escapes, and now takes up the life of a highwayman himself. Later he discovers a treasure; plays a rôle in polite society; engages in a frivolous love-match which forces him into a hasty marriage; loses his money; drifts to Paris, where he lives for some time in wild dissipations and subsequent misery; becomes a Catholic; undertakes a journey to Russia and the Orient; is transported by magic to the centre of the earth; and finally retires from the world to close his days as a hermit, and to bewail the nothingness of all things earthly.

Even this rapid sketch will indicate sufficiently that, with all its wealth of incident and character, this novel has in reality only one theme: the unmasking of the brute which Grimmelshausen evidently conceives the average man of his time to be. Of all the characters that appear in it, there is only one who has a heart for his fatherland, only one who dreams and hopes for the future of his race, and he is a demented vagrant! The poor fellow thinks himself Jupiter, and is planning a rejuvenation of this old world of ours.[49] He is going to create a hero who shall combine in himself the strength of Hercules with the grace of Venus and the wisdom of Mercury. This hero is to call a parliament of the best and wisest men of Germany, who will base the future constitution of the empire upon a union of the free cities. Revenues, taxes, bondage of every sort will be abolished. Kings and princes will be deposed. All religions will be united. There will be no more war, and the gods themselves will descend from Mount Olympus, to reside henceforth in blissful Germany and to watch over the maintenance of a universal peace.—Could a more bitter satire upon the age of the Thirty Years' War be imagined?

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[49] *Book* III, *c.* 3 ff.; *DNL.* XXXIII, 219 ff.

Two other men whose chief office it was to hold up a mirror to contemporary society must be considered: Andreas Gryphius (1616–64) and Christian Weise (1642–1708), the foremost representatives of seventeenth-century comedy. Gryphius, whom we already know as the author of bombastic and lurid tragedies of the pseudo-classic style, is perhaps the saddest example of the baneful influence which the hopeless degradation of national life exercised even upon the best minds of the time. He was undoubtedly a man of genius, a dramatist of Shaksperian fibre, who under more favourable conditions might have become the regenerator of the German stage. But his mind was early darkened by the awful impressions of war and popular suffering[60]; his imagination was cramped by the petty life around him, and the still pettier theories of poetry and art which resulted from it; and it is only in comedy that he freed himself from all this gloom and paltriness and became wholly himself. His *Horribilicribrifax* (between 1647 and 1650) is a most felicitous, if overdrawn, impersonation of the swaggering, swearing soldiery of the Thirty Years' War; in *The Beloved Briar Rose* (first performed in 1660) an amusing picture is drawn of Silesian village life with its neighbourhood quarrels and barnyard politics; in *Peter Squentz* (performed in 1657) the familiar interlude of the *Midsummer-night's Dream* is expanded into a play of its own, presenting a delightful caricature of the philistine town bourgeoisie. A scene from the third act of this farce, although it has not the merit of originality,[61] may at least give some idea of how thoroughly objective Gryphius's humour is, how it proceeds, not so much from the study of inner emotions and conflicts, as from the observation of certain ludicrous con-

Gryphius's comedies.

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[60] Cf. the poem *Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas*, *DNL.* XXIX, 403; and the sonnet *Dominus de me cogitat* (*ib.* 389).

[61] Cf. H. Palm in the introduction to the play, *DNL. l. c.* 193 ff.

ditions and outward discrepancies of human society.[52] Thisbe, represented by Master Klotz-George, the spool-maker, is waiting for her beloved Pyramus, represented by Pickelhäring, the court fool, when Master Klipperling, the carpenter, makes his untoward appearance in the rôle of the Lion. He frightens Thisbe away, picks up her hat and shawl and steps up to Master Kricks, the blacksmith, who stands near by performing his part as Moon. The latter takes him to task for not making his exit. "Hasn't Mr. Peter Squentz (the manager) told us that the actors ought not to lounge about on the stage and gape in the air?" Klipperling: "Well, see here. That is none of your business. I'll stand here just because you don't like it." A scuffle ensues between the two, in which Master Lollinger, the weaver, alias the Well, also takes a part. The Moon flaps his lantern about the Lion's head; both tumble over the Well and break his water-mug. With great difficulty Peter Squentz restores order: "Master Well, stand up! Master Lion, take yourself off! Master Moonlight, take your place again! Thisbe, fetch another mug! Master Moonlight, quick! light your lantern again!" And when at last order has been restored, it appears that the play cannot go on, because Pyramus has absented himself in order to wet his throat at the inn.

Weise's Bäurischer Machiavellus.

If Gryphius fell away from the artificial pomposity of the reigning school in practice rather than in theory, we see in Weise, his intellectual successor, a direct and conscious opposition against its very principles. He abhorred bombast and pretension. He openly proclaimed naturalness as the supreme law of writing[53]; and if in his own dramatic career he more and more drifted into the other extreme of commonplace and

[52] *DNL. l. c.* 228 ff.

[53] "Man muss die Sachen also vorbringen, wie sie naturell und ungezwungen sind, sonst verlieren sie alle *grace*, so künstlich als sie abgefasset werden"—words from his *Ueberflüssige Gedanken* quoted

platitude, we cannot help feeling that it was less his personal fault than the force of circumstances. Nothing shows more clearly the provincial narrowness of German life at the end of the seventeenth century than the fact that at the same time when Molière's dramas from the Paris stage were speaking to the whole civilized world, the foremost German dramatist saw himself confined to the cloisterly walls of the Gymnasium at Zittau, with his college boys as actors, and their parents and patrons as spectators. Keeping this condition of things in mind, we cannot but admire the breadth of view, the universality of interest, the intimate observation of life and human nature manifested in the works of this amazingly productive schoolmaster poet. Among the more than fifty dramas which he wrote, embracing biblical plays, historical tragedies, and every-day comedies, none perhaps is more characteristic of the way in which his irrepressible realism asserts itself in the midst of scholasticism and convention than *The Village Machiavellus* (1679).[54] The prelude of this comedy, which was one of its earliest dramatic efforts, still shows the unmistakable trace of pseudo-classic models, not, however, without a slight touch of irony. Apollo, represented as a sort of literary and moral Louis XIV., is holding what may be called a *lit de justice* on Mount Parnassus. Faith, Innocence, Simplicity, and other virtues appear before him and accuse Macchiavelli, the author of the *Principe*, of having, by his ill-considered and perverse writings, undermined morality and brought about the state of universal disorder from which mankind is now suffering. His majesty Apollo orders an investigation, and Macchiavelli himself is brought up for trial. He affirms that his book, far from preaching

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by Fulda in the introduction to a selection of Weise's dramatic works, *DNL.* XXXIX, *p.* xiii.—Weise's principal novel *Die drey ärgsten Ertznarren in der gantzen Welt* (1672), a peaceful counterpart to *Simplicissimus*, reprinted *NddLw. nr.* 12–14.

[54] *Bäurischer Machiavellus* (1679), *DNL.* XXXIX, 1–100.

an unscrupulous egotism, was on the contrary a satire directed against princely tyranny, and the accusation of being responsible for the prevailing immorality and wickedness of the world he meets with the assertion that the peasants, who certainly could not be suspected of having read his book, were fully as Macchiavellian, that is, destitute of moral principles, as any class of society. Apollo now appoints a commission to examine the ethical status of the peasantry, and the transition is made to the comedy proper.

The scene changes from Mount Parnassus to a German country village, Querlequitsch by name. The important office of Pickelhäring,—that is, public clown, master of ceremonies at weddings, christenings and funerals, and town messenger in one person—has become vacant. There are three candidates for this place; and the intestine war, the carnival of jealousy, pettiness, meanness, and trickery brought about in this official-ridden community through their competition, fully convinces the representatives of Apollo that the evils of modern society have their origin, not in the teachings of any one man, least of all in those of Macchiavelli, but in the sole motive power of all history, human nature. The directness and palpableness with which the wretched intrigues of the contesting parties and the abject depravity of German society at large are represented in this play are truly astonishing. The principal character, the true Macchiavellian, is the schoolmaster of the town. From two of the candidates he takes bribes, without of course doing anything for them except setting their respective patrons—the *Gerichtsschulze* and the *Landschöppe*—at loggerheads with each other. He himself favours the third candidate, on whom he has managed to palm off his daughter; and after a course of barefaced wirepulling, arbitrary delay of proceedings, and open defiance of law, he finally, having gone as far as invoking the military, comes out victorious. What in a measure justifies his conduct is the fact that none of the other characters

are morally above him, while intellectually they are all his inferiors. There is the feeble, timid *Gerichtsschulze*, anxiously guarding his official authority and mortally afraid of the imperious termagant whom he is unfortunate enough to call his wife. There is the ambitious *Landschöppe*, constantly encroaching upon the legal sphere of the *Gerichtsschulze*, himself however constantly duped by others. There is the ignorant priest, open to bribery, and ready to serve the ruling power. There is the whole board of aldermen, made up of selfish, philistine cowards, hopelessly lost in the meshes of red-tape bureaucracy. There is the gossip of the women, the barbarous tyranny of the military, the hypocritical subservience of the citizen to the nobleman, the insipid ceremoniousness of intercourse between people of equal rank, the insolent brutality toward those of inferior station. In short, a society rotten to the core and benumbed with artificiality, the representation of which in all its nakedness would speak for Weise's moral boldness as well as it certainly does speak for his artistic courage, if we did not have reason to believe that his educated audiences, accustomed, as they were, to look down upon peasant life as something entirely apart from themselves, failed to recognise their own image in this dramatic mirror.

Two scenes from this play, indicative, the one of the domestic, the other of the public life of the time, will show the scathing realism of Weise's satire. This is the fashion in which the *Gerichtsschulze* and his wife converse with each other [55]:

"He: Dearest, what is it? She: Have you seen the pleasant young man that came to the house? Won't he be a good match for our daughter? He: Is he a lover of hers? She: It is within our power to catch the bird. If we manage to have him elected Pickelhäring, our daughter has a husband. He: Well, there's the rub. You know how unreasonable the *Landschöppe* is. Who knows whether *he* hasn't pledged himself to somebody else. She: Oh, to have such a

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[55] *DNL.* XXXIX, 28.

wretched husband! What could the rat of a *Landschöppe* accomplish against his honour the *Gerichtsschulze?* I tell you, either you make better use of your authority or I will let the public know that there is a woman in Querlequitsch that knows how to get even with a *Landschöppe!* He: Please be quiet, and let things alone. She: You miserable coward! So far as you are concerned, the whole household and the welfare of the children might go to the dogs. Such an opportunity doesn't come every day. If you let somebody else get the better of you, I shall disown you as my husband. He: I have only one vote; what can I do? She: Nor has the *Landschöppe* more than one, and yet he manages to have things his own way. If you want to be a fool and be led by the nose, well, you can get all the ridicule you want. He: You are right. Thus far, for peace's sake, I have taken his intrigues in good part. But now the happiness of my child is at stake. Go and welcome the young man, and see how you can influence our daughter."

And this is the reception which is accorded to the board of Querlequitsch aldermen when they in a body appear before the military commander of the town in order to plead before him against the illegal actions of the schoolmaster, not knowing that these actions were abetted by the same officer whose aid they have come to invoke[56]:

"Officer: You accursed beasts, do you think a cavalier and officer like myself would have been sent on duty into this town in order to have himself insulted by you miserable wretches? Sulphur and pitch upon your accursed heads!

Gerichtsschulze: Herr Landschöppe, *you* had better be the speaker. I have no objection to ceding you my place.

Officer: Well, let me hear! Why is it that I must be bored by this merry company?

Landschöppe: Herr Einnehmer, *you* have more to do with duties.[57] Why don't *you* say something? *My* place is behind the Gerichtsschulze.

Officer: How long shall I wait, you dogs? Is this meant as a fresh insult?

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[56] *DNL.* XXXIX, 82 f.

[57] The expression is intended as a playful allusion to the officer's remark about his being in town *on duty.*

Einnehmer: Let *him* speak who has the highest salary. Honour and burden go together.

Officer: What are those dumb dogs muttering? Speak out or I shall make use of force. [*He seizes the Bettelvoigt by his sleeve.*] Say, rascals, what do you want?

Bettelvoigt: I don't know what business the Herr Gerichtsschulze has. May your lordship command him to speak for himself.

Officer: Hast thou nothing to bring forward in thine own name?

Bettelvoigt: No, I have nothing to do with the matter.

Officer: Well, then, by St. Valentine! get thee hence!

Bierschatzer: Oh, yes, we shall go presently.

Officer: What? Thou darest to go before I command thee? Stay! and let me hear your petition."

4. The Sentimentalism and Rationalism of the Eighteenth Century.

The generation which grew up at the beginning of the eighteenth century; which lived through a succession of wars—the Spanish, the Swedish, the Polish—actuated by the most narrow dynastic motives; which saw the youth of the country carried off by the recruiting-officers of the king of Prussia, and the savings of the citizen squandered by such princely libertines as Augustus the Strong of Saxony, this generation became incapable even of moral indignation at the wretched condition of public life, and settled down to a contemptuous indifference to the whims and excesses of their rulers. What is best in German literature from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the time of Frederick the Great, is a record of the feelings of private individuals, confined to the sphere of domestic virtues, and absorbed in theoretical speculations about an ideal world.

Utter stagnation of public life at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

If we remember that this was the epoch which immediately preceded the beginnings of a literary revival the like of which modern civilization has not seen,—the great classic period of German literature,—we are again led back to the main subject of this chapter: the consideration of the revolutionary forces which

Approach of a literary revival.

were at the bottom of German intellectual life during the long reign of absolutism from the days of Opitz to those of Lessing.

The English influence.

That among these forces during the first half of the eighteenth century the influence of English poetry and fiction was one of the most important, there can be no question. In the sixteenth century England had received from Germany the spark of a new religious life. While in Germany itself this spark developed into a fire, destroying the social and political structure to its very foundation, it had kindled in England the light of modern freedom and culture. While Germany's best men in the seventeenth century consumed their energies in a hopeless struggle against petty surroundings, Shakspere and Milton were borne along by the majestic stream of English public opinion. When now, in the first half of the eighteenth century, Germany had sunk to the very lowest level of political misery, when her best men, instead of inveighing any longer against national abuses, turned to the quiet realm of moral and æsthetic observations, it was natural that their glance should have been attracted by the powerful literary development which meanwhile had taken place on the other side of the Channel; and thus it came about that the mental stimulus which in the sixteenth century Germany had given to England was now returned to her with added force.[58].

[58] Cf. Max Koch, *D. Beziehungen d. engl. Litt. z. deutschen im* 18. *Jhdt.*—For the German influence on English literature of the sixteenth century cf. C. H. Herford, *Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century.* For the English influence on German literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cf. Tittmann's introductions to *Die Schauspiele der engl. Komoedianten* (*Deutsche Dichter d.* 16. *Jhdts.* XIII), to *Ausgew. Dramen Jacob Ayrer's* (*ib.* III, 128 ff.), and to *Die Schauspiele d. Hzgs Heinr. Jul. v. Braunschweig* (*ib.* XIV). A. Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany.* W. Creizenach in the introduction to his edition of the English comedians, *DNL.* XXIII.

It was Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* which gave incentive to one of the most popular kinds of German fiction in the eighteenth century, the so-called *Robinsonaden.*[59] Addison's *Spectator* and *Guardian* were imitated in the host of *Moralische Wochenschriften* which in the first decades of the century formed the only rallying-point for free discussion in Germany.[60] In Pope's writings, men of such different stamp as Haller and Hagedorn found moral nourishment. Pope's and Swift's example encouraged the tame satire of Liscow, Rabener, and Zachariae.[60a] Milton inspired critics like Bodmer and Breitinger to open, even though in a lame and awkward fashion, the battle for the delivery of poetic genius from the dictates of the intellect, which in course of time was to lead to the Storm and Stress agitation, and finally to the Romantic movement.[61] Thomson's *Seasons* re-echoed in Ewald von Kleist's *Frühling* (1749). And the effect of Richardson's novels upon the German taste of that time

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[59] That the main outline of Defoe's *Crusoe* had been anticipated in Grimmelshausen's *Continuatio des abenteuerlichen Simplicissimi DNL.* XXXIV, 189 ff.) is only an additional proof of the susceptibility of the German public of that time for this sort of literature. A specimen of Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* (1731) *DNL.* XXXVII, 484 ff.

[60] Cf. K. Biedermann, *Deutschld im* 18. *Jhdt* II, 1, 429 ff.—The foremost among these periodicals were *Die Discourse der Mahlern* (Zürich, 1721, chief contributors Bodmer and Breitinger, *DNL.* XLII, 1 ff.); *Der Patriot* (Hamburg, 1724); Gottsched's *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen* (Leipzig, 1725); *Neue Beiträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes,* commonly *Bremer Beiträge* (Bremen, 1745).

[60a] Cf. Gervinus, *Gesch. d. d. Dichtg* IV, 57 ff. 108 ff. Biedermann, *l. c.* II, 2, 12 ff.—Parts of Liscow's introduction to his *Sammlung satyr. u. ernsthafter Schriften* (1739) in *Bremer Beiträger* ed. F. Muncker, *DNL.* XLIV, 49 ff. Rabener's *Versuch eines deutschen Wörterbuchs* (1746) *ib.* 21 ff. Zachariä's *Der Renommist* (1744) *ib.* 261 ff.

[61] Cf. F. Braitmaier, *Gesch. d. poet. Theorie von d. Diskursen d. Maler b. auf Lessing* I, *c.* 2–8.

may be gathered from what Gellert writes after having read *Sir Charles Grandison*[62]:

"For oh! how many years have I not been able to weep, not for all the wonders of nature; so hard, so obdurate was my heart. But to-day I shed tears, flooded with tears my book, my desk, my face, my handkerchief. I was drowned with weeping. I sobbed with infinite joy, as though I were myself that blissful mixture of happiness and woe, love and pain, virtue and weakness. Is Richardson, then, a magician? Yes, he commands all that is touching and overwhelming, enrapturing and intoxicating. Richardson, thou immortal man! pride of human kind and prince of novelists!"

Widening of individual feeling through sentimentalism and rationalism.

But important as the stimulus received from England was, it would be a mistake to see in it the sole or even the dominant factor of the intellectual revolution at the eve of which Germany had now arrived. He who reads the history of German literature in the seventeenth century with an unprejudiced eye cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that there ran through it a constant undercurrent of opposition against princely omnipotence, orthodox intolerance, and literary conventionalism. This same current, having failed to break through the solid rock of public indifference and apathy, now turned into another channel, and instead of vainly beating against hopeless social conditions, spent itself in widening, deepening, and intensifying the inner life of the individual. We are inclined nowadays to speak with a condescending smile of the weakly sentimentalism and shallow rationalism of the eighteenth century. But we must not forget that sentimentalism and rationalism were in the first half of the eighteenth century the only possible manifestations of that spirit of independence which had been kindled by the Reformation, and which more than a

[62] Gellert's *Sämmtl. Schriften*, Leipz. 1839, VIII, 119. Cf. Julian Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. von Leibniz b. auf unsere Zeit* I, 212. Richardson's influence on Gellert's *Leben d. schwed. Gräfin* is shown by Erich Schmidt, *Richardson, Rousseau, Goethe p.* 23.

century of oppression had not been able to smother entirely. And if we are asked what it is that in the productions of that time appears to us as peculiarly indicative of a genuine inner life, we cannot help answering that it is just this sentimentalism, however weakly, or this rationalism, however shallow.

Günther.

It must be conceded that there is nothing noble or great in the career of such a man as Christian Günther (1695–1723). He squandered his talents in emotional excesses and sensual dissipations, and the bulk of his poems is concerned with the trivial pleasures of a boisterous student life and the torments which the wrath of an austere father, unrelenting creditors, and a faithless love brought upon him. But observe him as he strikes up a drinking-song[63]:

Brüder, lasst uns lustig sein,
Weil der Frühling währet,
Und der Jugend Sonnenschein
Unser Laub verkläret!
Grab und Bahre warten nicht;
Wer die Rosen jetzo bricht,
Dem ist der Kranz bescheret.

See him bidding farewell to his sweetheart[64]:

Will ich dich doch gerne meiden
Gieb mir nur noch einen Kuss,
Eh ich sonst das letzte leiden
Und den Ring zerbrechen muss.

In den Wäldern will ich irren,
Vor den Menschen will ich fliehn,
Mit verwaisten Tauben girren,
Mit verscheuchtem Wilde ziehn,

Bis der Gram mein Leben raube,
Bis die Kräfte sich verschrein,
Und da soll ein Grab von Laube
Milder als dein Herze sein.

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[63] Günther's *Gedichte* ed. Fulda, *DNL.* XXXVIII, 79. [64] *Ib.* 211 f.

Listen to his wild outcries of despair[65]:

Ich höre, grosser Gott, den Donner deiner Stimme.
Du hörest auch nicht mehr. Ich soll von deinem Grimme
Aus Grösse meiner Schuld ein ewig Opfer sein.
Ich soll, ich muss, ich will, ich gebe mich darein,
Ich trotze deinem Zorn, ich fleh nicht mehr um Gnade,
Ich will nicht, dass dein Herz mich dieser Straf' entlade.
Du bist kein Vater mehr, als Richter bitt ich dich:
Vergiss vorher dein Kind, hernach verstosse mich.

And you will realize how far this sentimental youth was lifted above his arid and monotonous surroundings; you will understand why Goethe placed this youth among the men from whom he himself derived his earliest inspirations.[66]

Brockes.

It is true that many of the elaborate descriptions of outdoor scenery by Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680–1747), Günther's more fortunate contemporary, are open to ridicule. The poet in him is often put in the shade by the well-to-do *bourgeois*. When he revels through seven pages in philosophical speculations about the usefulness of a roasted lamb[67]; when he expresses his delight in the perfume of a violet by what he calls "rational smelling," that is, by pronouncing between every inhalation one syllable of the following words[68]:

Dir–riech'–ich–die–se–schö–ne–Blu–me,
O–Gott–der–sie–mir–schenkt–zum–Ruh–me:
Ich–riech'–und–freu'–mich–dein–in–ihr;
Denn–du–al–lein–for–mierst–und–gie–best
Zur–Pro–be,–wie–so–stark–du–lie–best,
Der–Blu–men–Pracht,–Ge–ruch–und–Zier;
Die–Kraft–zu–rie–chen–schenkst–du–mir;—

when in a congratulatory poem on his own sixty-fifth birthday he thanks God for having blessed him thus far with 46,700 square meals and 23,360 comfortable nights,[69]—we

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[65] *DNL.* XXXVIII, 25.

[66] *Dichtung u. Wahrh.*, *book* 7, *Werke* Hempel XXI, 49.

[67] Cf. *DNL.* XXXIX, 289. [68] *Ib.* 375. [69] *Ib.* 376.

cannot help wishing that he had kept the reasons for his optimistic belief in the beauty and reasonableness of the universe somewhat more in the background. But if, on the other hand, we compare the intellectual and emotional world of this contented Hamburg citizen with the harsh, dissonant, and barren life of the contemporaries of Moscherosch and Grimmelshausen, how much richer, fuller, and more intense it is! Brockes, as Gervinus has said, emancipated the senses. Very fittingly he gave to the collection of his principal poems the title *Earthly Joy in God* (1721 ff.); for there is nothing on this earth which does not call forth his sympathy and loving contemplation. And if, like the Dutch painters of still life, he especially delights in the small and the unpretentious, if he goes into raptures over cherry-blossoms,[70] over a golden beetle,[71] over the delicate wings of a fly,[72] over the dewdrops on the foliage,[73] he is by no means insensible to the great phenomena of nature. His phlegmatic temper is stirred into slow but long-drawn waves of emotion when, in a panegyric of seventy stanzas, he celebrates the sun, as a symbol of eternity[74]:

Ocean so vieler Erden,
Himmlisch Lichts—und Lebensmeer,
Reich, darin vereinigt werden
Dieser grossen Körper Heer,
Zeiget nicht dein weit Gefilde
Die Unendlichkeit im Bilde,
Wenn ich ein unendlichs Blau
In des Himmels Höhen schau?

And it seems an anticipation of Klopstock's *Frühlingsfeier*, when, in another poem,[75] he attempts a gorgeous description of a devastating thunderstorm followed by the freshness and serenity of a balmy spring day.

Between Brockes and Klopstock stands Albrecht von

[70] *DNL.* XXXIX, 351. [71] *Ib.* 307. [72] *Ib.* 366.
[73] *Ib.* 334. [74] *Ib.* 319. [75] *Ib.* 325.

Haller (1708–77), the author of *The Alps* (1729). He, too, was far from being a great poet. What Lessing has said[76] with regard to one of his descriptions of Alpine flora, that, "although one hears in every word of his the artist at work, yet one does not see the object at which he is working," must be said of most of his productions. But in this very laboriousness and heaviness of Haller's style we recognise the true worth of the man; we see in it the effect of a deep inner struggle; we are brought into the presence of a soul oppressed with the sense of earthly depravity, yet dauntlessly striving for the ideal of a consummate existence. The offspring of a patrician Bernese family, a physiologist of great eminence, during the best years of his manhood the most influential and most widely known teacher at the University of Göttingen, in his old age living in his native town as a universally venerated patriarch, a man incessantly working for the best and highest, Haller seems never to have been at peace with himself. From 1736 till his death in 1777, through forty-two successive years, he kept a diary in which from time to time he jotted down observations about his own inner life. From beginning to end these notes are replete with self-incriminations.[77]

Haller.

"For oh how long has there been no vision of the divine! Vanity, envy, hatred, wrath! Miserable prayer without strength or faith! Miserable resolves without doings! Meanwhile the time of mercy passes by; who knows how long it will last!—Oh, God, destroy the false sources of my comfort, the dallying trifles of my studies! I read in the Bible the story of the suffering Saviour, and think at the same time of my plants and other buffooneries!—I feel the nothingness of all the things which men summon up for their consolation. The brain and the mental organism are active and free, but the soul is irrevocably drawn into an abyss, which itself is insensibly sinking into an unfathomable depth."

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[76] *Laokoon, c.* 17; *Werke* ed. Lachmann-Muncker IX, 104.

[77] Haller's *Tagebuch* II, 221 ff.

Such were the doubts and moral conflicts from which Haller strove to free himself, at least momentarily, by the contemplation of immortal nature and innocent primitive life. Brockes, the contented rationalist, we may picture to ourselves walking about in comfortable stateliness along the well-cultivated banks of the Elbe, enjoying every sight and every sound; Haller we see fleeing into the wilderness of snowy mountains and impassable rocks to find there what civilization cannot give him: the image of true manhood. He rejoices that Nature has denied to the Swiss the dangerous riches which were the ruin even of mighty Rome; that by throwing up the bulwark of the Alps she kept them from the rest of the world—for man is man's greatest enemy; that she granted them only one native metal: iron, the upholder of freedom[78]:—

> Denn, wo die Freiheit herrscht, wird alle Mühe minder,
> Die Felsen selbst beblümt, und Boreas gelinder.

He describes the manly sports of the mountaineers, the wrestling- and shooting-matches, the dance on the village green, the chant of the shepherds. He introduces a hoary patriarch who recounts to the assembled youth the deeds of their ancestors; another who inveighs against the tyranny from which Tell delivered the Swiss, but under which half of Europe is still pining[79]:

> Wie Tell mit kühnem Mut has harte Joch zertreten,
> Das Joch, das heute noch Europens Hälfte trägt:
> Wie um uns alles darbt, und hungert in den Ketten,
> Und Welschlands Paradies gebogne Bettler hegt.

And with this healthy, strong, manly mountain life he contrasts the ambition, the corruption, the vices, and the misery of the cities. In short, he gives vent to feelings which a

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[78] Haller's *Die Alpen*, *v.* 59 f.; *Gedichte* ed. Hirzel *p.* 23.
[79] *Ib. v.* 295 ff.; *l. c. p.* 33.

few decades later, fanned by the impassioned eloquence of Rousseau, were to set the youth of all Europe aflame.

The Anacreonticists.

While Haller found true humanity in the solitude of Alpine valleys, Hagedorn (1708–54), Gleim (1719–1803), and the other so-called Anacreonticists sought for it in the idyllic seclusion of an epicurean fairy-land. That the intellectual life of these men was devoid of great incentive and true inspiration there can be no doubt. Even in the best of Hagedorn's poems, such as "Johann der muntre Seifensieder" or "Der Nachtigall reizende Lieder,"[80] we are made to breathe the artificial atmosphere of the seventeenth-century pastoral; and the essential untruthfulness of Gleim's endless dalliance with love, wine, and friendship is revealed in the following verses which he prevailed upon himself to write in the midst of the second Silesian war, a few weeks after the bloody capture of Prague[81]:

Wein und Liebe
Bändigt Helden;
Wein und Liebe
Macht Verträge;
Wein und Liebe
Stiftet Frieden.
Drum, o Deutschland,
Willst du Frieden?
Wein und Liebe
Kann ihn stiften.

That even men of this stamp should have appeared to their contemporaries regenerators of literary taste, shows in a most striking manner the utter sterility of feeling from which it was the office of sentimentalism and rationalism to deliver this age. That they were indeed forerunners, on the one hand, of Wieland's serene culture, on the other of the new era of popular poetry which was to set in with

[80] *DNL.* XLV, 1, 58 ff. 130 f.

[81] *Ib.* 226.

Herder's re-discovery of the Volkslied,[82] gives us an idea of the rapidity with which the ascending movement in German life of the eighteenth century, after it had once been started, rose to its climax.

Gellert the typical representative of private morality.

One more writer must be considered before we reach the time of Lessing and his contemporaries: Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1717–69). It is indeed hard to realize that there should have been a time when this timid bachelor, in whose professorial make-up there was not a fibre of creative genius, was the foremost of German authors. How petty and nerveless is the wisdom taught in his *Fables* (1746), how thin and weak-lunged the praise of the Almighty sung in his *Spiritual Odes* (1759), what an utter lack of true character in his comedies,[83] how impossible the situations in his one novel.[84] Yet, if Frederick the Great could call Gellert "the most sensible" of German men of letters;[85] if Goethe could say of his writings that about the middle of the eighteenth century they were the foundation of moral culture in Germany[86]; if his popularity embraced all classes and ages, from kings and princes who visited Leipzig in order to attend his lectures, down to servant-maids who pressed upon him to kiss his hands,[87]—there must have been something in him

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[82] This is especially true of Gleim's *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier* (1757.8; *DNL.* XLV, 1, 241 ff.), which, inspired as they were by the grand events of the Seven Years' War, suggest indeed the tone of genuine popular lyrics.

[83] *Die Betschwester* (1745), *Die kranke Frau* (1747), and others, analyzed by Muncker, *Bremer Beitr.*, *DNL.* XLIII, 1, 24 ff.

[84] An analysis of the *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G.*** (1746) is given by Muncker *l. c.* 30 ff.

[85] "C'est le plus raisonnable de tous les savans allemans"—alleged words of Frederick's after his interview with Gellert Dec. 18, 1760; Gellert, *Sämmtl. Schr.* IX, 16.

[86] *Dichtg u. Wahrh.*, *book* 7, *Werke* XXI, 76.

[87] Cf. Biedermann, *Deutschld im* 18. *Jhdt* II, 2, 26 f.

which made him in a peculiar manner the representative of his age.

Gellert combined in himself, more than any other writer of his time, those two tendencies which, as we have seen, had come to be the chief forms of the individualistic undercurrent of German literature after it had turned away from public life: rationalism and sentimentalism.

He appeals to us either by his humorous smile or his sympathetic tears. He dissects his own feelings as well as those of others. With loving tenderness he lingers over whatever he analyzes, most tenderly, however, over the foibles and weaknesses of the human heart. God, the supreme rational being, is to him the highest object of venerating contemplation; but he finds God not through the medium of an orthodox creed or a system of philosophy, but in his own heart, in the experiences of his fellowman, and in nature. In one of his fables, he ridicules the superficiality of philosophic systems by telling the story of a hat.[88] Its first possessor wore it round, with the flaps turned down; the second had two of the sides cocked; the third made a three-cornered hat of it; the fourth had it dyed; the fifth turned it inside out; and thus, while it remained one and the same hat, it appeared always new, and with every change it set the fashion of the whole country—in short, Gellert concludes: "Es ging dem Hute fast wie der Philosophie." In one of his religious poems,[89] he looks back upon the day that is just fading:

> "How have I spent it? Did it pass in vain? Did I strive earnestly for the good? Did I glorify God through zeal and diligence in the vocation which He has assigned to me? Did I benefit myself and the world? Did I rule my own heart? In the enjoyment of the good things of this world did I think of the Almighty, by whom they were created? And how did my heart enjoy the sweet hours of human intercourse? Did I feel the bliss of friendship? Did I speak

[88] *DNL.* XLIII, 40. [89] *Ib.* 234.

what I felt? Was my earnestness gentle and my frolic innocent? Did I watch over my dear ones with tender care? Did I lead them to the good by my example? Was I not slow in the duties of compassion? Did I rejoice in the happiness of others? Did I repent a false step as soon as I had taken it? Did I battle down evil desires? And if God to-night should summon me, am I ready to stand before Him?"

One of the most graceful and delicate descriptions of rural life before the days of *Werther* is contained in a letter of Gellert's,[90] relating his experiences as a guest on the estate of a large landholder, which at the same time is a striking example of his happy way of blending sentimental reflectiveness with a vein of gentle rationalistic humour. It reminds us of Chodowiecki's subtile drawings.

"I sleep in a room," he says, "looking on one side into the court-yard, on the other upon the lawn and the field. Ordinarily about six o'clock in the morning, I stand at the window and gaze with an insatiable eye into the autumn lying over field and garden. The wide open sky, of which we in the city know nothing, is to me from this window an altogether new spectacle. Here I stand and forget myself for half an hour in looking and thinking. After these happy moments, still intoxicated with the spirit of the morning, I open the door to call for a servant. But, instead of one, there appear at least three at a time, having run themselves out of breath for my sake, and all of them bent on being at my service. In short, whether I want it or not, I must submit to being dressed by them. During this occupation, five or six gentle greyhounds make their call, with whom I enter into a little conversation, because I know they won't answer me. Meanwhile the gamekeeper narrates to me their feats, describes to me the whole hunting-ground, and expresses his regret that I am no sportsman. Because I have given him several times to understand that one ought to be charitable even to animals, he has secretly inquired of my gracious hostess whether I was a Pietist.

"Now comes the coffee. I take a book, assume a learned mien, and at once my servants flee. The books which I have taken with me are Terence, Horace, and Gresset. Would you believe that I find in these poets far more beauties here in the country than in the city? But why should you wonder? Here Nature herself, who inspired them, is their interpreter. And she interprets them, if not as learn-

[90] Gellert's *Sämmtl. Schr.* IV, 182 ff.

edly, at least more pleasantly and distinctly than the most renowned commentators.

"When I have read enough, I pay my respects to my gracious hostess and her daughter. I usually find them busy with a book or looking over accounts with the superintendent. Everybody receives me with kind smiles; and even the superintendent, who for twenty years was a sergeant, forces his grim face into a pleasant expression. During this hour (for this is about the length of time that I spend with my hostess) I earn in some sense the privilege of enjoying myself on her estate: for our conversation usually turns on the education of her son, the hope of her house. Toward noon I sit in the courtyard; I ring with a little bell, and now there comes—who do you think? a herd of feathered folk, shooting along on foot or on the wing; and I feed them—chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, doves, all in a heap, and count my people. After this, I visit the partridges and quails and the young doves in their cot. A lovely scene! Here a mother feeds her children, there another is breeding a still hidden posterity, while her husband tries to induce her to let him take her place on the nest, and to refresh herself by a meal. First he entreats her gently and lovingly, presently he talks quite earnestly, and if this does not make her yield, he commands her in a lordly, cockish tone, and turns about ten times in a circle, as though he would not look at her any longer, and at the same time would give her a chance to leave the nest unnoticed.

"I must add an amusing incident which illustrates the church-going habits of this region. They are very tyrannical. Last Sunday I went alone to church, because madame had some guests. I took my seat, as it chanced, next to a peasant unknown to me. A student ascended the pulpit and perpetrated an awful sermon on the text of the lilies of the field. He was so philosophical that he explained to the peasants what sowing and reaping were. The sermon had its natural effect upon me. I gently fell asleep. In this church, however, you are not at liberty to go to sleep over a poor sermon. My neighbour woke me up with a rather sudden shock, and shouted: 'The boy is coming.' I didn't know what he meant, and since the preacher was just demonstrating with a passage from Cicero that no one was rich who could not maintain an army from his private fortune, I thought he had aroused me on account of this learned quotation, and therefore went to sleep again. Presently I awoke a second time from quite a severe blow, and saw a little peasant boy, with a long stick, standing in front of me, and nodding his head at me reproachfully. Now I understood what my neighbour had meant. He had

warned me of this boy, whose office it is to run about in the church with his lance and keep the congregation awake."

More emphatically than any other writer of his time, Gellert was a private individual. In his *Lectures on Morality*,[91] not a single word about public or patriotic duties is to be found. The battle of Rossbach, the first national victory won by a German army since the days of Maximilian, an event which sent a thrill of joy through the hearts of all who still hoped for a great future of the German state, aroused in Gellert only feelings of horror and human compassion. "Oh, that battle of Rossbach!" he writes,[92] "I have lived through it, at a distance of only a few miles; smitten with sickness, shaken by the roaring cannonade, with panting breast and shivering hands, in prayer for the dying,—no, not in prayer, for I could neither pray nor weep, sighs only were left to me,—thus I heard it, through four long hours, heard it even the day before it began, in the rattle of the guns which thundered along under my window." If this seems weakness, let us not forget that it was through this very turning away from outer conditions, through this very limitation to the inner self that the German mind was at that time preparing for a new era of national greatness. And Gellert, by making self-reflection and self-discipline the keynote of his life as well as his literary work, did more than any other man of his generation to cultivate that spirit which was to find its highest expression in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

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[91] Printed *Sämmtl. Schr.* VI and VII. [92] Biedermann *l. c.* 52.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AGE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE HEIGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

(The Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century.)

German literature and Frederick the Great.

SCHILLER, in the poem *Die deutsche Muse*,[1] points with just pride to the independent character of modern German literature. No princely favours, he says, were bestowed upon it; no Augustus, no Medici fostered it; the greatest German of his time, Frederick of Prussia, had no place for it at his court

Von dem grössten deutschen Sohne,
Von des grossen Friedrichs Throne
Ging sie schutzlos, ungeehrt.
Rühmend darf's der Deutsche sagen,
Höher darf das Herz ihm schlagen:
Selbst erschuf er sich den Wert.

However true this, generally speaking, is, Goethe was equally right when he declared[1a] that the heroic struggle of Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War added a new and higher life to German literature; and Kant was right when he designated[2] the intellectual epoch from which he himself had sprung as the age of Frederick the Great.

1. The Enlightened Absolutism.

There is a strange and somewhat melancholy fascination in imagining what would have been the aspect of modern

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[1] *Sämmtl. Schr., Hist.-Krit. Ausg.* (Goedeke) XI, 329.
[1a] *Dichtg u. Wahrh. b.* 7; *Werke* Hempel XXI, 62.
[2] *Was ist Aufklärung?*; *Werke* ed. Hartenstein IV, 166.

German civilization if Frederick, instead of throwing the weight of his mighty personality into the balance of monarchical absolutism, could have stood for the cause of popular freedom. That his own convictions pointed in this direction, there can be little doubt. It reads like a passage from Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, when, in his first political pamphlet, the *Considerations sur l'état du corps politique de l'Europe*, he says[3]: "The princes must be made to know that their false maxims are the poisonous fountain-head whence flow all the evils that are the curse of Europe. Most princes are of the opinion that God, solely from regard for their own greatness, happiness, and vanity, has created those masses of men whose welfare has been entrusted to them, and that their subjects have no other purpose but to be the instruments of princely passions. Hence their desire of false glory, their wild ambition for usurping everything, the weight of the taxes with which they burden the people; hence their laziness, arrogance, injustice, and tyranny; hence all those vices with which they degrade human nature. If the princes would rid themselves of this fundamental error and seriously reflect upon the aim and purpose of their power, they would find that their rank and dignity, which they are so jealously guarding, are solely the gift of the people; that these thousands of men entrusted to them have by no means made themselves the slaves of a single individual in order to render him all the more formidable and powerful; that they have not submitted to one of their fellow-citizens in order to become a prey to his arbitrary caprices, but that they have elected from their midst the one whom they expected to be the most just and benevolent ruler, the most humane in relieving distress, the bravest in warding off enemies, the

Frederick's theoretical liberalism.

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[3] *Œuvres* VIII, 35 f.—Cf. for the following Hettner, *Gesch. d. d. Lit. i.* 18. *Jhdt* II, 14 ff. Freytag's *Bilder* IV, 220 ff. Treitschke, *D. Gesch. i.* 19. *Jhdt* I, 49 ff. Hillebrand, *German Thought p.* 52 ff.

wisest in avoiding destructive wars, the most capable of successfully maintaining the public authority." Not even Montesquieu has more emphatically pointed out the greatness of English parliamentary life than Frederick, in the following passage of his *Antimachiavel*[4]: "It seems to me that, if there is a form of government which may be held up as a model for our days, it is the English. There, parliament is the supreme judge both of the people and the king, while the king has full power of doing good, but none of doing evil." And Americans ought not to forget that Frederick most heartily welcomed the Declaration of Independence,[5] and that his government was among the very first to enter into relations of commercial reciprocity with the United States.[6]

Furthermore, it is equally certain that the intellectual classes all over Germany would have hailed no event with greater unanimity and enthusiasm than any steps which Frederick might have taken toward granting his subjects a share, however limited, in the management of public affairs. Most of the great German thinkers and poets, from Klopstock to Kant and Schiller, were at heart republicans. Great as was the stimulus which their admiration of Frederick imparted to their works, it would have been a hundred times greater if they could have sympathized with his methods of government. As in the time of the Reformation, there was again a chance for the kindling of a mighty flame of popular freedom, which, nourished and propagated by the best and noblest of the educated classes, might have swept from one end of Germany to the other, burying the hundreds of petty tyrants in a gigantic conflagration, and weld-

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[4] *Œuvres* VIII, 125. 255.

[5] *Ib.* XXIII, 353. That Frederick's friendly feeling toward the United States was at least partly due to his resentment of the faithless policy pursued toward him by the English, there can be no doubt.

[6] Cf. W. Oncken, *D. Zeitalter Friedr. d. Grossen* II, 838 ff.

ing the hundreds of lifeless embryonic states into one free, united people.[7]

His practical absolutism.

We may regret that nothing of this kind happened. But it is only due to historic truth to say that, if ever a similar vision had flitted across Frederick's mind, which it probably did not, he would at once have consigned it to the region of empty dreams. Reared in the atmosphere of military paternalism; placed upon the throne of a state whose policy from its earliest times had had unscrupulous aggrandizement and centralization for its chief maxim; called upon to defend the very existence of this state in a deadly struggle of seven years against the combined forces of more than half of Europe, he could not fail to become convinced of the absolute necessity of autocratic methods of government for his own country, and to see in the improvement and perfection of these methods the supreme task of his life.

His idea of public service.

Frederick has given to the world the wonderful spectacle of an autocrat who acknowledged himself a servant of the people.[8] In 1759, after the terrible defeat of Kunersdorf, when Berlin seemed to be at the mercy of the Austrian and Russian armies, he wrote to a friend[9]: "I will throw myself in their way, and have them cut my throat, or save the capital. Had I more than one life, I would give it up for my fatherland. Do not think that I shall survive the ruin of my country. I have my own way of thinking. I do not wish to imitate either Sertorius or Cato. I have no thought of my fame, my only thought is the state." Frederick's whole life bore out the truth of this sentiment. He gave to Prussia an administration more efficient and more just than existed in

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[7] That a similar attempt made by Joseph II. failed, is no proof that Frederick might not have succeeded.

[8] Cf. *Œuvres* IX, 193.

[9] Letter to the Marquis d'Argens, Aug. 16, 1759; *Œuvres* XIX, 79.

any European country of his time. He established, in principle at least, equality of all his subjects before the law. He made the unrestricted liberty of religious belief and philosophical thought a fundamental principle of legislation.[10] He delivered Germany from the curse of princely libertinism, which for more than a century had been gnawing at the very root of her national life. In a word, he gave the sanction of the state to that protest against arbitrary despotism which we have seen to be the motive power in German intellectual life during the preceding epoch. In this sense he stood indeed for the cause of freedom.

Dualism in modern German literature.

This dualism in the political attitude of Frederick the Great, which was more or less imitated by all the other German princes of the time, gave to the literature of the second half of the eighteenth century its most distinguishing feature. Still debarred, on the one hand, from practical participation in public life; favoured, on the other, with a large degree of freedom in theoretical belief and speculation; spurred on by the sight of a great hero and wonderful military achievements, the German men of thought and culture now more fervently than ever turned to the cultivation of the ideal, and by holding up to their countrymen the image of a world of beauty, truth, and perfection helped to engender that craving for the realization of ideal demands in national institutions which, in the nineteenth century, has created the German state.

Regeneration from within its keynote.

Four literary generations, succeeding each other in close continuity and covering the period from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, co-operated in this work of regenerating the national body by imparting a new life to the national mind: (1) The contemporaries of Frederick

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[10] Cf. Hettner *l. c.* 27 f.

the Great himself; (2) the contemporaries of the French Revolution; (3) the contemporaries of the Napoleonic wars; (4) the forerunners of the Revolution of 1848. Our present task is a consideration of the leading men of the first of these epochs.

2. Klopstock.

It was in 1748, the same year in which Frederick, in the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, achieved his first great political triumph, that Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803), in the three opening cantos of his *Messias*, sounded that morning call of joyous idealism and exalted individualism which was to be the dominant note of the best in all modern German literature. No one has more vividly described the magic spell which the name of Klopstock exercised upon all aspiring minds of the middle of the eighteenth century than Goethe in *The Sorrows of Werther*. In his account of the garden-party where Lotte for the first time danced with him, and in the twinkling of an eye set his whole being aflame, Werther relates among other incidents the disturbance created by a sudden thunderstorm. The company scatters; Werther and Lotte are fortunate enough to meet alone. When the worst of the storm is over, they step to a window. "In the distance," these are his own words,[11] "the thunder was dying away, a glorious rain fell gently upon the land, and the most refreshing perfume arose to us out of the fulness of the warm air. She stood leaning upon her elbow; her glance penetrated the distance, she looked heavenward, and upon me; I saw her eyes fill with tears; she laid her hand upon mine, and said—Klopstock! I at once remembered the beautiful ode[12] which was in her mind, and lost myself in the torrent of emotions which rushed over me with this

Klopstock's influence reflected in Werther.

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[11] *Die Leiden d. jungen Werthers*, letter of June 16; *Werke* XIV, 36.
[12] *Die Frühlingsfeier*; *DNL.* XLVII, 104 ff.

name. I could bear it no longer; I bent over her hand and kissed it with most blissful tears."

What was it that gave Klopstock his extraordinary sway over the hearts and minds of his generation? What was the mission which he was born to fulfil to the German people?

Klopstock's mission.

Klopstock led German literature from the narrow circle of private emotions and purposes to which the absolutism of the seventeenth century had come near confining it, into the broad realm of universal sympathy. He was the first great freeman since the days of Luther. He did not, like Haller, content himself with the sight of an independent but provincial and primitive life, as afforded by the rural communities of Switzerland. He did not, like Gellert, turn away from the oppressed and helpless condition of the German people to a weakly, exaggerated cultivation of himself. He addressed himself to the whole nation, nay, to all mankind. And by appealing to all that is grand and noble; by calling forth those passions and emotions which link the human to the divine; by awakening the poor down-trodden souls of men who thus far had known themselves only as the subjects of princes to the consciousness of their moral and spiritual citizenship, he became the prophet of that invisible republic which now for nearly a century and a half has been the ideal counterpart in German life of a stern monarchical reality.

His spirituality.

No one perhaps has better expressed the limitations of Klopstock's genius than Schiller, when in trying to define his place among modern poets he says[13]: "His sphere is always the realm of ideas, and he makes everything lead up to the infinite. One might say that he robs everything that he touches of its

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[13] *Ueber naive u. sentiment. Dichtg; Sämmtl. Schr.* X, 473.—The best modern account of Klopstock is F. Muncker's *Klopstock: Gesch. s. Lebens u. s. Schriften.*

body in order to turn it into spirit, whereas other poets seek to clothe the spiritual with a body." It is undoubtedly this lack of plastic power, this inability to create living palpable beings, which prevented Klopstock from attaining the high artistic ideal which his first great effusions seemed to prophesy. The older he grew, the more he withdrew from the actual world, the more he surrounded himself with the halo of superhuman experiences, the more he insisted on describing the indescribable, and expressing the inexpressible; until at last the same man, whose first youthful utterances had unloosened mighty forces of popular passion, was intelligible only to a few adepts initiated into the mysteries of his artificial, esoteric language.

And yet it is easy to see that it was precisely through this exaggerated and overstrained spirituality that Klopstock achieved the greatest of his work. He would never have produced the marvellous impression upon his contemporaries which he did produce, had he attempted to represent life as it is. That task had been done by Moscherosch, Weise, and their successors. What was needed now was a higher view of human existence, the kindling of larger emotions, the pointing out of loftier aims. A man was needed who should give utterance to that religious idealism which, though buried under the ruins of popular independence, was nevertheless the one vital principle of Protestantism not yet extinct; a man who, through an exalted conception of nationality, should inspire his generation with a new faith in Germany's political future; a man who, by virtue of his own genuine sympathy with all that is human in the noblest sense, and through his unwavering belief in the high destiny of mankind, should usher in a new era of enlightened cosmopolitanism. It was Klopstock's spirituality which enabled him to assume this threefold leadership, and the immeasurable services rendered by him in this capacity to the cause of religion, fatherland, and humanity may well

make us forget the artistic shortcomings by which they were accompanied.

The Messias.

None of Klopstock's works has been so much subjected to misleading and unappreciative criticism as his greatest religious poem, the *Messias*. Let us admit at the outset that in this seeming epic nearly all the most essential epic qualities are lacking. Reality in events, clearness of motive, naturalness of character, directness of style, all these are things for which, in most parts of the poem, we look in vain. Throughout its twenty cantos we constantly circle between heaven, hell, and earth, without at any given moment seeming to know where we are. Christ's passion and death, the central action of the work, is robbed of its human interest through the over-anxious desire of the poet to exalt the divine nature of the Saviour, and to represent the atonement as predetermined in the original plan of creation. The countless hosts of angelic and satanic spirits which hover before us in endless space are for the most part without individual features. Even the human sympathizers and adversaries of the Son of God play their parts more by portentous looks, unutterable thoughts, effusive prayer, or mysterious silence, than by straightforward action.

Not an epic, but an oratorio.

But what do all these criticisms mean? They simply mean that it was a mistake in Klopstock's admirers to call him a German Milton, and that the *Messias* ought not to be looked upon as an epic poem at all. Not Milton, but the great German composers of church music were Klopstock's spiritual predecessors; his place is by the side of Bach and Händel as the third great master of the oratorio.[14]

The three most important parts of an oratorio, outside of the orchestral accompaniment, are: the recitative, the arias, the choruses. In a religious oratorio, such as Bach's *Pas-*

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[14] Cf. Julian Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. seit Leibniz* II, 237.

sion Music, or Händel's *Messiah*, the recitative is in the main confined to the narrative passages of the gospels and to the words of single persons introduced in them. The chorus performs a double task. Either it represents groups of persons taking part in the action itself, as, for instance, the body of the disciples or the Jewish populace; or it is conceived of as a collective spectator, giving utterance to the feelings and emotions which the suffering, death, and triumph of the Saviour cannot help arousing in the mass of believers. In the arias, finally, these same feelings of compassion and adoration are expressed; not, however, as emanating from the whole of the Christian community, but from the individual human soul. In other words, the oratorio is a combination of an epic element, represented by the recitative, with lyric and dramatic elements, represented by aria and chorus. And if we may liken it as a whole to a festive garland wound around the altar of the Most High, it is clear that in this comparison the recitative corresponds to the slender stems and branches which, strung together and intertwined with each other, form a gentle line of even colour running through it all, while the arias and choruses cluster around it like variegated masses of exuberant foliage.

The epic, lyric, and dramatic elements of the oratorio.

Klopstock's *Messias*, like the oratorio, consists of epic, lyric, and dramatic elements. Of these, the epic element corresponds to what the recitative is in the oratorio. It is the background of the whole, it forms a connecting link between the other parts, but in itself it would be incomplete. Only in the lyric and dramatic passages, those passages which correspond to the arias and choruses of the oratorio, does the poem rise to its height; only here is the full splendour of Klopstock's musical genius revealed.

The same elements in the Messias.

The time will certainly come when even the narrative part of the *Messias* will again, as in Goethe's youth, find readers willing to let themselves be carried along by

its powerful and sonorous, though sometimes monotonous, flow of oratory. Nothing could be grander and, at the same time, simpler than the general outline of the poem. How, from the scene in the first canto, where Christ on the Mount of Olives consecrates himself to the work of redemption, we are led through the councils of heaven and hell, through Gethsemane and Golgotha, to the Resurrection and Ascension, until at last "the living heavens rejoice and sing about the throne, and a gleam of love irradiates the whole universe,"[15] —all this is nobly planned.

The epic element.

Nor is there a lack of individual scenes full of inner life and divine fire. What an air of sublime mystery and awe lingers over the lonely night spent by Jesus on the Mount of Olives at the beginning of the poem.[16] In the distance there glimmers around him the light of sacrifices, flaming, to appease the Deity, on high Moriah. John, his beloved disciple, ascends with him, but stops half-way, remaining in prayer at the sepulchres of the prophets. Gabriel, the archangel, from a grove near the summit, sees Jesus coming and addresses him with words of admiration. Jesus passes by, answering him only with a look of tenderness and mercy. He reaches the summit and stands in God's presence. He prays. He recalls how in the solitude of eternity, ere the cherubim and seraphim were formed, he and the Father were together; how they saw the future destiny of the world, the sin and fall of man, and how he then resolved to accomplish through his own death the work of redemption. "Oh earth, how wast thou, before my humiliation in this human form, my chosen, my beloved object! and thou, Oh Canaan, sacred land, how oft has my compassionate eye been cast on thee!" Now he is ready to fulfil his work. He

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[15] Words of Goethe's, *Dichtg u. Wahrh. b.* 10; *Werke* XXI, 170.

[16] *Der Messias* ed. Hamel (*DNL.* XLVII, 1. 2), *canto* I, 43 ff. Cf. the prose transl. by Joseph Collyer, Boston 1811.

lifts his head to the heavens and his hand to the clouds, and vows that he will redeem mankind. And the Eternal Father raises his head above the highest heavens, and stretches his hand through the immensity of space, and vows that he will forgive the sins of the repentant children of men.

"While the Eternal Ones thus spake, all nature shook. Souls, just emerging from non-existence, which had not yet begun to think, trembled, and first experienced sensation. The Seraphim were overwhelmed with awe, like the earth when she expects an approaching tempest. A sweet delight and intoxicating sense of eternal life entered the souls of future Christians. But the satanic spirits, senseless and in despair, fell from their thrones, the deep broke under them, and lowest hell resounded."

What a brilliancy of oratorical diction and invention there is in the scene where Christ, after his resurrection, holds judgment on Mount Tabor over the souls of those who have recently died! Among them the souls of warriors and those of infants are contrasted.[17]

"There had been a battle. Below, in the silent fields, there lay the dead and the dying; like thunderclouds their spirits streamed upward, with them the leaders of the two armies,—both unscrupulous conquerors. The Judge of the world lifted his right hand, thunders crashed upon the two great criminals, the traitors to humanity, echoing long and low as they were hurled down to hell; and from hell there came the sound of curses and scourging, the warriors slaughtered on the field of battle rising against their masters to chastise them.—But now, with the whisper of angelic harps, there arose melodies of sweetest joy. For earthless there came, from Ganges and Rhine, from Niagara and Nile, souls of children flying to Mount Tabor, as lambs nourished by the spring sport on the hillside. And the Judge judged not. From star to star they were led, encircled by the dance of the joyful hours; and they learned many wonders until, changed into heavenly youths, holier realms they entered."

Or, to select a passage of less fanciful imagery, what

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[17] *Canto* XVI, 307 ff.

could surpass in graceful delineation and true poetic feeling the description of the beautiful morning on lake Tiberias when the risen Christ appears to his disciples![18]

Herauf war die Morgendämmrung gestiegen,
Und den Strahl des werdenden Tages milderte lichter
Nebel, ein Schleier, aus Glanz und weissem Dufte gewebet.
Ruh' war auf die Gefild' umher, sanftatmende Stille
Ausgegossen. Ein Nachen entglitt da langsamsichtbar
Voll von Freunden dem lieblichen Duft des werdenden Tages.
Nackt bei dem überhangenden Netz stand vorn in dem Nachen
Kephas. Es sassen umher, mit silberhaarigem Haupte
Bartholomäus, Lebbäus, gelehnt auf ein Ruder, mit vollem
Freudeglänzenden Blicke der Zwilling, mit lächelnder Heitre
Selbst Nathanael, sassen die Zebedäiden, Jakobus
Mit den Gedanken im Himmel, Johannes beim Herrn auf der Erde.
Da sie näher heran zu dem Ufer kommen, erblicken
Sie den Mittler, allein sie erkennen ihn nicht; doch verehren
Sie den ernsten Fremdling, der dort des Morgens, in sanfte
Ruhe versenkt, und seiner Gedanken sich freuet.

It is evident from these examples, which might easily be multiplied, that even that part of the *Messias* which is closest to the narrative of the gospels is by no means the dreary and tiresome waste which popular prejudice and pragmatic criticism have made it out to be. Looked upon as the recitative element of a musical composition, it appears to fulfil a perfectly legitimate function, that of transporting the hearer into the loftier realm of supernatural experiences, and of forming with its vague, shadowy sounds a background for the richer notes of the lyric and dramatic passages of the poem.

The lyric element. Comparisons. Episodes.

For the most part, these passages are so closely interwoven with the narrative itself that it is impossible to consider them separately. This is, for instance, the case with the poetic images and comparisons. Klopstock's most impressive comparisons are not epic, they do not serve to make a certain

[18] *Canto* XIX, 268 ff.

part of the narrative, by which they were suggested, more graphic and tangible; they are lyrical, they lead out of the reality of the narrative into a realm of deeper emotions and higher experiences; they can be fully appreciated only when conceived of as uttered in song. Christ is represented standing before Herod, as divine Providence called before the tribunal of reprobate sceptics.[19] Mary hastens to meet her Son, as a noble thought soars toward heaven.[20] Gabriel, finding the Saviour asleep on the Mount of Olives, gazes on his peaceful, benign countenance with rapt veneration,[21] "as a travelling seraph views the dim face of the blooming earth on a spring night, when the evening star stands high in the lonely heaven and beckons to the pensive sage to gaze at him from the dusky grove." The same must be said of the many digressions and episodes. They also do not to any considerable extent heighten the reality of events, but they do heighten, perhaps more than anything else, the effect of the poem as a lyrical expression of a fervent and exalted spirituality. Take as a typical example two scenes in which one of the most powerful of Klopstock's characters appears: Abbadona, the fallen angel, who, in the service of Satan, longs for the innocence and happiness of his former existence. The first scene is in the hellish assembly where Satan discloses his plan of putting the Messiah to death.[22] Abbadona is sitting by himself, far away from Satan's throne, in gloomy solitude, lost in thoughts of the past, especially of his friendship with Abdiel, the exalted seraph, who on the day of Satan's revolt deserted the ranks of the reprobate and returned to God. Abbadona was near escaping with that heroic seraph; but surrounded with the rapid chariots of Satan and the furious bands of those who fell from their

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[19] *Canto* VII, 553 ff. Cf. Erich Schmidt, *Charakteristiken p.* 133 f.

[20] *Canto* IV, 919.

[21] *Canto* I, 541 ff.

[22] *Canto* II, 627 ff. Cf. *The Seven First Cantos of the Messiah, trls. into English Verse*, London, 1826.

allegiance, he drew back, and though Abdiel, with looks of menacing love, strove to hasten his escape from the rebel hosts, inebriated and dazzled by the delusive prospect of his future godhead, he no longer followed the once powerful glance of his friend, but suffered himself to be carried in triumph to Satan.

> Now mournfully he sits
> Engross'd in thought, and muses o'er the scenes
> Of youth and innocence, the morning fair
> Of his creation, when to life and light
> Abdiel and he, at God's first call, had sprung
> Together forth. In ecstasy exclaim'd
> Each to the other, "Who are we? Oh say
> How long hast thou been here?" In dazzling beams
> Then shone the distant glory of the Lord
> With rays of blessing on them; round they look'd
> And saw innumerable multitudes
> Of bright immortals near; and soon aloft,
> Uprais'd by silvery clouds, were they convey'd
> To the Almighty Presence.

Abbadona, tortured by these reminiscences, bursts into a torrent of tears, and now resolves to oppose the blasphemous speech of Satan calling for the death of the Messiah. Thrice he attempts to speak, but his sighs stop his utterance. "Thus, when in a bloody battle two brothers are mortally wounded by each other's hand, at last, each to the other being mutually known, they are unable to speak, and sighs only proceed from their dying lips."

The other scene is in the garden of Gethsemane.[23] Abbadona has gone in search of the Saviour, led by an instinctive though distrustful hope of his own redemption. Through every desert has he roved, every river has he traced from its source, in the solitude of every sequestered grove his trembling feet have wandered. To the cedar he has said: Oh tell me, in rustling whispers tell me, dost thou

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[23] *Canto* V, 485–633.

conceal him?" To the towering mountains he has cried: "Bow down your solitary tops to my tears, that I may see the divine Jesus, who, perhaps, sleeps on your summits!" But he feels that he is unworthy to see his face. "O Jesus, thou art the Saviour only of men! Me thou wilt not save!" Lost in these thoughts, he enters the grove, where he finds Christ in the agony of his final resolve, and suddenly he is struck with the resemblance of this man lying there prone in the dust to the mighty Son of God, who at the head of the heavenly hosts once hurled Satan and him to hell.

O thou who yonder dost contend with death,
Who art thou? Com'st thou from the dust? A son
Of that dishonour'd earth which bears God's curse,
And, ripe for judgment, trembling waits the day
Of dissolution? Com'st thou from her dust?
Yes! Human is thy form! But majesty
Divine around it beams! Thy lofty eye
Speaks higher language than of graves and death!
Ha! trace I not tremendous likeness there?
Cease, boding terror! Death eternal, cease
To shake my shudd'ring soul! But yes! Ah, yes!
I trace resemblance to the Son of God!
To him who erst, borne on the flaming wheels
Of his red chariot, from Jehovah's throne
Thund'ring pursued us!
Once, but once, I turn'd
My trembling head behind in wild affright,
Saw the tremendous Son, caught the dread eye
Of him who wielded thunder! High he stood
Above his burning car; midnight's deep gloom
Lay stretch'd beneath his feet; below was death!
Omnipotent he came.—Woe, woe is me! Ah, then
The whirl of his avenging sword, the sound
Of his swift thunderbolt with deaf'ning din
Affrighted nature shook! I saw no more.
In night my eyes were seal'd; plunging I sunk
Through storm and whirlwind, through the doleful cries
Of scar'd creation, fainting in despair;

Yet was immortal! Lo, I see him now!
E'en now I view his likeness in the form
Of yonder man, who, prostrate on the ground,
Lies there! Is he—ah, can he be the great,
The promis'd Saviour?

Airs and responsive chants.

Thus far we have been considering scenes in which the lyric element is intimately connected and interwoven with the narrative. But it is not in these alone that Klopstock's lyrico-dramatic fervour asserts itself. Again and again, from the first canto to the last, it forces its way, as it were, with elemental power through the epic narrative, and assumes a form of its own.[24] Sometimes it is the poet himself who in rapturous song gives vent to his religious enthusiasm, as at the beginning of the poem,[25] where he calls upon his immortal soul to sing the redemption of mankind; or at the opening of the eleventh canto,[26] where he girds himself to penetrate the mysteries of the Resurrection:

"If in my religious flight I have not sunk too low, but have poured sublime sensations into the hearts of the redeemed, guided by the Almighty, I have been borne on eagle's wings! O religion! I have learned from revelation a sense of thy dignity. He who waits not, with devout awe, by the pure crystal stream that from the throne flows among the trees of life, may his praise, dispersed by the winds, not reach mine ear, or if undispersed, not pollute my heart! Ah, among the dust had lain my song, had not yon living stream poured from the New Jerusalem, the city of God, and thither turned its course. Lead me still farther, thou guide invisible, and direct my trembling steps. The Son's humiliation have I sung, let me now rise to sing his glory. May I attempt to sing the Victor's triumph, the hills and valleys yielding forth their dead, and his exaltation to the heaven of heavens, the throne of the eternal Father? O thou,

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[24] Hamel, *DNL.* XLVI, 1, *p.* viii, shows very strikingly that even the metrical form of the *Messias*, although having the outward appearance of the epic hexameter, as a matter of fact consists of 'free rhythms.'

[25] *Canto* I, 1 ff. [26] *Canto* XI, 1 ff.

to heaven raised, help me, help me and those who hear me, to bear the terrors of thy glory!"

Again there are the airs and responsive chants with which angels and sacred men and women accompany the central action, softening its horrors and heightening its pathetic beauty. Thus at the beginning of the seventh canto,[27] the seraph Eloa, standing on a morning cloud, greets the dawn of the day of crucifixion with a hymn of exultant joy. Thus in the tenth canto,[28] the prophetesses Miriam and Deborah, who with Adam, Eve, Abraham, and other saints and seers of the Old Testament form a cloud of witnesses around the cross on which Jesus is dying, break forth into the following antiphony:

"*Deborah.* O thou, once the most lovely of human beings! thou who wast the fairest of the sons of men! how are thy features changed by the livid traces of death!

Miriam. My heart is plunged into softest sorrow, and clouds of grief surround me. Yet still to me he appears the most beautiful of men, of all creation the most lovely, fairer than the sons of light, when glowing with fervour they adore the Eternal.

Deborah. Mourn, ye cedars of Lebanon, which to the weary afford a refreshing shade. The sighing cedar is cut down, of the cedar is formed his cross.

Miriam. Mourn, ye flowers of the vale! The thorn-bush spread its branches on the bank of the silver stream. They have been wound around the head of the Divine One as a crown of thorns.

Deborah. Unwearied he lifted up his hands to the Father in behalf of sinners. His feet unwearied visited the dwellings of affliction. Now are they pierced with cruel wounds.

Miriam. His divine brow, which he bowed here into the dust, from which ran mingled blood and sweat, ah! how has the crown, the bloody crown now pierced it!

Deborah. Oh, Miriam! his eye breaks and his life breathes hard. Soon, ah! soon, will he look his last toward heaven.

Miriam. O Deborah! a mortal paleness sits on his faded cheeks. Soon will his divine head sink to rise no more.

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[27] *Canto* VII, 1 ff. [28] *Canto* X, 486 ff.

Deborah. Thou who shinest above, O celestial Jerusalem, burst into tears of joy. Soon will the hour of affliction be past.

Miriam. Thou who sinnest below, O terrestrial Jerusalem, burst into tears of grief. For soon at thy barbarous hands will the sovereign Judge require his blood.

Deborah. The stars in their courses stand still, and creation is stricken dumb at the sufferings of her Creator!—at the sufferings of Jesus! the everlasting High Priest! the Redeemer! the Prince of Peace!

Miriam. The earth also stands still, and from you who dwell on the earth, dust upon dust, the sun has withdrawn his light. For this is Jesus! The everlasting High Priest! the Redeemer! the Prince of Peace! Hallelujah!"

The choral element.

In the later portions of the poem, finally, it is the choral element which carries everything before it. In fact, the whole of the last canto is a succession of jubilant choruses, thronging about the Redeemer, as he slowly pursues his triumphal path through the heavens until at last he ascends the throne and sits at the right hand of the Father. It would be hard to imagine a more impressive *finale* than this bursting of the universe into a mighty hymn of praise echoing from star to star, and embracing the voices of all zones and ages; and it is indeed strange that a poet who was capable of such visions as these should have been taken to task by modern critics[29] for not having confined himself more closely to the representation of actual conditions.

Klopstock's other work.

If in the *Messias* we see the crowning poetic manifestation of the religious idealism of the German people which in the period preceding Klopstock had found its expression in the emotional individualism of the hymn-writers of the seventeenth century, the pietistic godliness of Spener and Francke, the colossal musical compositions of Bach and Händel, we find the chief importance of Klopstock's other works in their rela-

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[29] Especially Scherer, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 424.

tion to the national and cosmopolitan sentiment of his age.

His efforts to nationalize German literature.

Here again Klopstock's services have failed to receive due recognition from our own time. His cosmopolitanism has been called fantastic, his patriotism laboured and unreal; the rejuvenation of Germanic antiquity in his odes and dramas has been derided as empty phraseology; his turning away from Frederick the Great has been referred to the ignoble motive of disappointed ambition. The truth is that Klopstock's efforts to nationalize German literature stand on the same level with Frederick's political achievements. Had Frederick been more liberal than autocratic, instead of being more autocratic than liberal, had he been more German than Prussian, instead of being more Prussian than German, we should undoubtedly have seen the greatest German poet of his time a devoted follower of the greatest German monarch. We may regret that this sight has been denied us; that even Klopstock did not find in contemporary life sufficient nourishment for his imagination; that even he, who had started out as an ardent admirer of Frederick, was at length compelled to seek in the remote past for a realization of his dreams of German greatness and liberty. But let us be careful not to attach any personal blame to our regret; let us be satisfied to note here again the fatal trend of German history since the failure of the Reformation, which now for fully two centuries had tended to put Germany's best men in opposition to the actual and the present; and let us be thankful to Klopstock for having brought back from his flight into the Germanic dreamland figures and conceptions which, better understood and more fully developed by the Romanticists of the nineteenth century, above all by the brothers Grimm, by Uhland, and by Richard Wagner, have now become a permanent element in modern German culture.[30]

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[30] In England, this revival of ancient national traditions began

His patriotism and cosmopolitanism.

And must we not also be grateful to Klopstock for the hopes which he entertained for the future of his country and of humanity? There are few poems in German literature inspired with a nobler and more genuine sense of nationality than the one in which he represents the English and the German Muse entering the lists of the poetic arena.[31] Proudly relying on the record of former victories, the daughter of Britain appears on the scene; with glowing cheeks and trembling with youthful ambition, the German maid steps to her side. With friendly condescension, the British woman addresses her young rival, reminding her of the many trophies she has won, of her contest with the Muses of Greece and Rome, and warning the young German not to risk too dangerous a race.

Sie sprach's. Der ernste, richtende Augenblick
Kam mit dem Herold näher. "Ich liebe dich!"
Sprach schnell mit Flammenblick Teutona,
"Brittin, ich liebe dich mit Bewunderung!

Doch dich nicht heisser als die Unsterblichkeit,
Und jene Palmen! Rühre, dein Genius
Gebeut er's, sie vor mir; doch fass' ich,
Wenn du sie fassest, dann gleich die Kron' auch.

Und, o wie beb' ich! o ihr Unsterblichen!
Vielleicht erreich' ich früher das hohe Ziel!
Dann mag, o dann an meine leichte
Fliegende Locke dein Athem hauchen!"

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somewhat earlier than in Germany: Macpherson's *Remains of Ancient Poetry* appeared in 1760, his *Fingal* 1762, Percy's *Reliques* 1765. In Germany, it was Gerstenberg, the author of *Ugolino*, who in his *Gedicht eines Skalden* (1766) introduced for the first time the Northern mythology into modern poetry. Cf. Hamel in his introd. to Klopstock's *Oden*; *DNL.* XLVII, *p.* xx f. Muncker, *Klopstock p.* 379 f.

[31] *Die beiden Musen* (1752); *DNL.* XLVII, 86. Cf. Goethe's criticism of the poem; Eckermann, *Gespräche* I, 115.

Der Herold klang. Sie flogen mit Adlereil.
Die weite Laufbahn stäubte, wie Wolken, auf.
Ich sah: vorbei der Eiche wehte
Dunkler der Staub und mein Blick verlor sie!

What could be finer than the cosmopolitan enthusiasm with which Klopstock greeted the outbreak of the French Revolution? The heroic struggle of the Seven Years' War seems to him of secondary importance compared with this dawn of a new era in human existence.[32] In a gigantic vision he sees the spirit of Freedom rise before a tyrannical princeling and throw him into speechless terror.[33] Even in his bitter disappointment over the wild orgies of Jacobinism, he finds comfort in the noble daring of Charlotte Corday.[34] And although he despairs of seeing the French people establish the reign of lawful liberty, yet he takes leave of them as of brothers, with a feeling of deepest sympathy.[35]

His sympathy with the French Revolution.

Menschenfeind soll ich also im Blütenhaare noch werden?
Der hier stets obstand, siegend kämpfete? Nein!
Menschenelend soll mich zum Menschenfeinde nicht machen;
Thränen im Blicke, nicht Zorn, scheid' ich, Brüder, von euch.

And, finally, what a divine belief in the inevitable victory of reason, what a truly prophetic spirit breathes in the ode,[36] written long before the French Revolution, in which the poet, like an ancient Germanic seer, from the wild plunges of a riderless steed predicts the future freedom of his own country!

His hopes for Germany.

Ob's auf immer laste? Dein Joch, o Deutschland,
Sinket dereinst! Ein Jahrhundert nur noch;

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[32] *Die États Généraux* (1788); *DNL.* XLVII, 177.
[33] *Der Fürst u. s. Kebsweib* (1789); *ib.* 181.
[34] *Mein Irrthum* (1793); *ib.* 187.
[35] *Die Denkzeiten* (1793); *ib.* 189.
[36] *Weissagung* (1773); *ib.* 155.

So ist es geschehn, so herrscht
Der Vernunft Recht vor dem Schwertrecht!

Denn im Haine brauset' es her gehobnes
Halses, und sprang, Flug die Mähne, dahin
Das heilige Ross, und ein Spott
War der Sturm ihm, und der Strom ihm!

Auf der Wiese stand es, und stampft', und blickte
Wiehernd umher; sorglos weidet' es, sah
Voll Stolz nach dem Reiter nicht hin,
Der im Blut lag an dem Grenzstein!

Nicht auf immer lastet es. Frei, o Deutschland,
Wirst du dereinst! Ein Jahrhundert nur noch;
So ist es geschehn, so herrscht
Der Vernunft Recht vor dem Schwertrecht!

Klopstock was a true liberator. He was the first among modern German poets who drew his inspiration from the depth of a heart beating for all humanity.[37] He was the first among them, greater than his works. By putting the stamp of his own wonderful personality upon everything that he wrote or did, by lifting himself, his friends, the objects of his love and veneration into the sphere of extraordinary spiritual experiences,[38] he raised the ideals of his age to a higher pitch; and although his memory has been dimmed through the greater men who came after him, the note struck by him still vibrates in the finest chords of the life of to-day.

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[37] Cf. the *Aus dem goldenen Abce der Dichter* in his *Gelehrtenrepublik* (1774), *ib.* 277 f.

[38] Among Klopstock's finest odes devoted to friendship and the joys of nature are the following (*DNL.* XLVII): *Die künftige Geliebte* (1747); *An Ebert* (1748); *An Fanny* (1748); *Der Zürcher See* (1750); *Die Frühlingsfeier* (1759); *Der Eislauf* (1764); *Die frühen Gräber* (1764); *Die Sommernacht* (1766); *Rothschild's Gräber* (1766).

3. Wieland.

The second great literary name of the Friderician age is that of a man who in nearly every respect was the exact opposite of Klopstock: Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813). While Klopstock leaned to the English taste, Wieland inclined to the French. While Klopstock was an ardent and uncompromising republican, Wieland was in turn an advocate of enlightened absolutism,[39] an admirer of the French Revolution of 1789,[40] and again, after the declaration of the republic, a spokesman of German paternalism.[41] While Klopstock, with a tenacity which came near being stubbornness, clung throughout his life to the spiritual ideals of his youth, Wieland constantly passed from one mental state to another, from pietism to cynicism, from supernaturalism to materialism, from Platonic to Epicurean views, until at last he persuaded himself that he had found the solution of all moral problems in a *juste milieu* between pleasure and virtue, instinct and duty.

Contrast between Klopstock and Wieland. Their common task.

But in spite of this personal contrast between the two men, or rather because of it, Wieland performed a task for German culture closely allied to that performed by Klopstock. He, no less than the latter, helped to prepare the ground for that perfect intellectual freedom and equipoise, that universality of human interest and endeavour which was to be the signal feature of cultivated German society toward the end of the eighteenth century. Klopstock did his part by expanding and elevating the moral sentiment, Wieland

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[39] Cf. the novel *Der goldene Spiegel* (1772); *Werke* Hempel XVIII, XIX; and the essay *Ueber d. göttl. Recht d. Obrigkeit* (1777); *Werke* XXXIII, 101 ff.

[40] Cf. *Unparteiische Betrachtungen über d. dermal. Staatsrevolution in Frankreich* (1790); *Werke* XXXIV, 66 ff.

[41] Cf. *Betrachtungen über d. gegenw. Lage d. Vaterlandes* (1793); *Werke* XXXIV, 291 ff.

did his by fostering a refined sensuality. Klopstock drew his strength from Pietism, Wieland was rooted in Rationalism. He endeavoured to quicken and broaden the realistic current of German literature which we have seen running at greater or less depth from Grimmelshausen to Gellert; while Klopstock endeavoured to give a new and stronger impetus to the idealistic current which we have likewise seen flowing throughout the preceding epoch. Both men seem more remarkable to us for their aspirations than for their attainments. Klopstock often soared too high, Wieland still oftener sunk too low. The absence even in the Friderician age of truly national tasks and of a firmly established public opinion imparted to both an eccentric individualism, which in Klopstock appeared as a disregard for the limitations of reality, in Wieland as a capricious delight in its superficial appearances. And yet it is an injustice to both Klopstock and Wieland to speak of their works in a manner which is now only too common, as though they had no message to deliver to our own time, as though the spiritual ardour of the former, the serene sensuousness of the latter had lost their meaning for us moderns.

Wieland's Agathon the typical expression of eighteenth-century rationalism.

The first work in which Wieland showed his true fibre was the novel *Agathon*, published in 1766–67. Up to that time he had been oscillating between weak attempts in the seraphic manner of Klopstock and Young, and equally weak imitations of French rococo literature. Now for the first time he struck a theme which brought out his own literary individuality and which at the same time put him into contact with the strongest intellectual current of the age, the rationalistic movement. To quote his own testimony [12] about the intentions followed out in this novel, he chose the Horatian line: '*Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit*' for its motto, "not as though he wished to show in the character

[12] *Ueber d. Historische im Agathon; Werke* I, 59.

of Agathon what wisdom and virtue are by themselves, but how far a human being through natural power may advance in both; how large a part external circumstances have in our way of thinking, in our good and evil acts, in our wisdom and folly; and how only through experience, mistakes, incessant self-improvement, frequent changes in our mode of thought and, above all, through the example and friendship of wise and good men, we may become wise and good ourselves." In other words, he wished to point out in an object-lesson what the rationalistic philosophy of the time tried to point out theoretically—the true way toward individual perfection; and if this object-lesson appears less convincing to us than it appeared to Lessing when he called *Agathon* "the only novel for thinking men,"[43] this much is certain, that in the whole period between the *Simplicissimus* and *Wilhelm Meister* there is no German novel dealing with as broad phases of life in as successful a manner as Wieland's *Agathon*.

Analysis of Agathon.

The opening scene[44] is a magnificent classic-romantic picture in the style of the Alexandrian novel. Agathon, a noble Athenian youth, having for a time played a leading part in the politics of his native town, by a sudden revulsion of public feeling has lost popular favour and is now on his way into exile. Roaming about at nightfall in a mountain wilderness, he is startled by strange tumultuous sounds. To trace their origin, he climbs to the top of the glen where he happens to be, and here witnesses an extraordinary spectacle: a crowd of infuriated Menads shouting, dancing, raging about in the bright moonlight.

"A luxuriant imagination, or the pen of a La Fage, might undoubtedly give an alluring description of such a scene; but the impression which the reality itself made upon our hero was

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[43] *Hamb. Dramat.*, 69. *St.*; *Sämmtl. Schr.* ed. Lachm.-Muncker X, 80. [44] *Werke* I, 69 ff.

far from being pleasant. The stormy, flowing hair, the rolling eyes, the foaming lips, the swollen muscles, the wild gestures, the frenzied extravagance with which these demented women in a thousand wanton attitudes shook their spears wound with ivy and tame serpents, clanged their tin cymbals or stammered forth abrupt dithyrambs with babbling tongues: all these outbreaks of a fanatic rage which appeared to him all the more detestable because it proceeded from a superstitious belief, aroused in him nothing but aversion and disgust. He wished to flee away, but it was impossible, because at this very moment he was noticed by them. The sight of a youth in a place and at a festival which were not to be desecrated by the eye of a man, suddenly arrested the course of their tumultuous gaiety and turned their whole attention upon his appearance. A youth of Agathon's beauty, in this place, at this time! Could they take him for anything less than Bacchus himself? In the frenzy which had taken hold of their senses, nothing was more natural than this idea, which gave to their imagination such a fiery impulse that they suddenly seemed to see not only the god himself, but his whole retinue also. Their enchanted eyes brought before them the Silens and the goat-footed Satyrs swarming about him, and tigers and leopards licking his feet caressingly. Flowers, it seemed to them, sprang from beneath his feet, and fountains of wine and honey welled forth from under his steps and ran in foaming torrents down the rocks. Of a sudden, the whole mountain, the forest and the neighbouring rocks resounded with their loud Evoë, Evoë! accompanied by such a frightful din of drums and cymbals that Agathon, struck with astonishment and fright, remained as motionless as a statue while the enraptured Menads wound their extravagant dances around him, by a thousand frantic gestures expressing their delight over the supposed presence of their patron god."

The sudden appearance of Cilician pirates rescues Agathon from this awkward situation, but only to plunge him at once into another and more serious trouble. In common with the crowd of revellers, he is made captive by the robbers and put aboard a ship which is to convey them with other prisoners to the slave markets of Asia Minor. On board this vessel he has a third, equally unexpected and sensational experience. Among his fellow captives, he

is attracted by a handsome youth dressed as a slave, whom he soon recognises as Psyche, the love of his boyhood. They had been brought up together in the temple of Delphi; both were consecrated to the service of Apollo; both were inspired with a glowing desire for purity and moral perfection; no wonder that they formed a friendship instinct with all the innocent idealism of inexperience, which made their spiritual communions in the moon-lit temple groves seem to them like glimpses of Elysium. But the intrigues of a jealous and voluptuous priestess soon interrupted the course of their youthful love. Agathon and Psyche were parted, and only now, through a curious combination of circumstances, they are again brought together as the fellow victims of barbarian slave-hunters. But even this reunion is of short duration. While Psyche is kept in the service of the chief of the pirates himself, Agathon is taken to Smyrna, and at a public auction sold to Hippias, the Sophist.

Wieland introduces this figure by giving a characterization of the Sophists in general, and of their relation to Socrates in particular.[45]

"It must be admitted that the wisdom of which the Sophists made a profession was in quality, as well as in effect, the exact opposite of that professed by Socrates. The Sophists taught the art of exciting other men's passions, Socrates inculcated the art of controlling one's own. The former showed how to appear wise and virtuous, the latter how to be so. The former encouraged the youth of Athens to assume control of the state, the latter pointed out to them that it would take half their lifetime to learn how to rule themselves. The Socratic philosophy took pride in going without riches, the philosophy of the Sophists knew how to acquire them. It was complaisant, prepossessing, versatile; it glorified the great, cringed before their servants, dallied with the women, and flattered everybody who paid for it. It was everywhere at home, a favourite at court, in the boudoir, with the aristocracy, even with the priesthood; while Socrates's

[45] *Werke* I, 89 f.

doctrines, aggressive and uncompromising as they were, would be pronounced unprofitable by the busy, insipid by the idle, and dangerous by the devout."

Hippias, the representative of this pseudo-philosophy, into whose hands Agathon has now fallen, is a Mephistopheles in disguise. He determines to undermine the religious innocence and idealistic enthusiasm of his young slave. His first attack, consisting of a systematic exposition of his own sensualistic doctrines, in which we easily recognise the student of Voltaire,[45a] falls completely flat. Agathon has not in vain been reared at Delphi, he repudiates Hippias's materialistic view of life and vindicates the spiritual nature of man with an assurance worthy of a Leibniz or Wolff. But now there follows the second attack. Hippias introduces him to the house of the beautiful Danae, and here the soaring idealist falls a prey to sensual temptation.

Among all the characters of the novel, that of Danae is the best drawn. She is the representative, in Greek disguise, of the large class of emancipated women who in the eighteenth century occupied leading positions at nearly every European court. While Agathon spent his youth hedged in by noble sentiment and thoughts of the divine, she was from early childhood tossed about in a cold and selfish world, and soon found herself irresistibly drawn into the gay and empty life of an adventuress. Brought up at Athens as the foster-child of a fruit-vender, she early aroused the admiration of artists and fashionable young men as a pantomime-dancer. Alcibiades made her his mistress, but soon deserted her. Having left Athens to seek her fortune in the colonies, she was captured by pirates and subsequently bought for the harem of the younger Cyrus. By a shrewd mixture of passion and coyness, she had obtained an almost unlimited power over this prince, and saw herself the actual if not nominal ruler of a brilliant

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[45a] The influence of Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) both on the construction and, in a negative way, on the tendency of *Agathon* is evident.

court, when Cyrus fell in the battle of Kunaxa, leaving her a fortune large enough to enable her to continue a life of luxury and leisure. She now retired to Smyrna, where her house soon came to be the meeting-place of the Sophists, Sybarites, and libertines.

This is the situation when Hippias introduces Agathon into her circle. The guileless idealist is carried away with the charm of her manner, he sees in her a beautiful soul, he pictures her an epitome of all that is noble and exalted. No wonder that the calculating coquette has an easy game with him, that the modest Psyche soon begins to fade in his memory, that he finds complete happiness only in the fiery embrace of Danae. But in her also he awakens a new sensation. For the first time in her career, she has found a true lover, and for the first time she herself feels what love is. She dreams of a new and better life, she is ready to exchange all the luxuries and frivolities of society for poverty and solitude, if shared by her beloved Agathon; she longs for a vision of innocence and simplicity in the midst of her cynical and fashionable surroundings. Hippias, who has himself formerly enjoyed intimacy with Danae, and whose vanity is naturally offended through this unexpected issue of the intrigue, now resolves to part the lovers. He reveals to Agathon the past of his mistress, and Agathon, suddenly disenchanted and persuading himself that he has wasted his feelings on a soulless reprobate, tears her from his heart and hastens away from the scene of his sentimental debaucheries.

We now for a long time lose sight of Danae. Agathon starts out upon a new political career. His faith in republican ideals having been shaken by his Athenian experiences, he consents to become prime minister at the court of an enlightened though voluptuous despot: Dionysius of Sicily.[46]

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[46] *Werke* III, 35 f.

"Agathon did not have as high-flown conceptions of human nature now as formerly. Or rather, he had come to know the infinite difference between the metaphysical man, of whom one thinks or dreams in speculative solitude, and the natural man, as he proceeds in crude simplicity from the hands of the universal mother; and the difference between these two and the artificial man whom society, laws, opinions, customs, needs, dependence, a continual struggle of his desires with his circumstances, of his own advantage with the advantage of others, and the consequent necessity of continual dissimulation and masking of his true intentions, have falsified, degraded, distorted, and disguised, in a thousand unnatural and deceptive forms. He was no longer the youthful enthusiast who imagined that it would be as easy to carry out a great undertaking as it is to conceive it. He had learned how little one ought to expect of others, how little one ought to count on their co-operation, and (what is most important) how little one ought to trust one's self. He had learned how much one ought to yield sometimes to circumstances. He had learned that the most perfect plan is often the worst; that evil cannot be eradicated at once; that in the moral world, as in the material, nothing moves in a straight line; in short, that life is like a voyage, where the pilot must adapt his course to wind and weather, where he is not for a moment sure not to be delayed or drifted aside by contrary currents, and where everything depends on this: in the midst of a thousand involuntary deviations from one's course, yet to hold one's mind unbendingly fixed upon the port of destination."

It is with such views of life, so radically different from his former ones, that Agathon enters upon his new duties at the court of Dionysius. He tries to suppress the demands of his own heart, he closes his eyes to feminine charms, he devotes his whole energy to the affairs of the state, he attempts to be a reform minister in the manner of Pombal. For a time he succeeds; but soon he falls a victim to the intrigues of the court camarilla, chief among whom are a rascally crown-official, who feels his position endangered through the inaugurated reforms, and his equally vicious and equally sanctimonious wife, who is enraged by Agathon's indifference to her overtures.

Once more Agathon has gained a valuable experience through disappointment, once more he is forced to change the scene of his activity. But now the end of his trials is at hand. At Tarentum, in the house of the Pythagorean Archytas, he finds at last peace and contentment. Archytas himself is the ideal rationalist. Without refusing to acknowledge the claims of the sensual nature of man, he sees man's highest task in establishing a complete and undisturbed harmony between these claims and his spiritual vocation.[47] In the universe he sees[48] "not the work of a blind chance or of mechanical forces, but the visible manifestation of the ideas of an infinite intellect; the eternal working of an eternal, intellectual power, from which all powers draw their being; an all-comprising city of God, whose citizens are all rational beings, whose lawmakers and rulers are justice and wisdom, whose fundamental law is a universal striving for perfection." He feels[49] that a belief which is so completely in accord with reason; which leads in the straightest way to the greatest moral goodness and the purest joy of existence possible on this earth; which, if made universal, would stop the sources of all evil, and realize the dream of a golden age,—that such a belief is its own proof. And he himself, from the moment when this truth for the first time flashed upon him, became a citizen of the universe, knowing[50] that he belonged, "not primarily to himself, not to his family, not to a special civic community, not to the glebe of earth which we call fatherland, but to the great whole in which his place, his destiny, his duty have been assigned to him by the only sovereign whom he acknowledges above himself."

In closest friendship with this man, Agathon regains the harmony of his own intellectual existence. And at the same time, his emotional nature is permanently satisfied. Psyche, his first youthful love, whom he finds happily married to

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[47] *Werke* III, 209. [48] *Ib.* 213. [49] *Ib.* 215. [50] *Ib.* 214.

one of Archytas's sons, is discovered to be his own sister; and Danae, the memory of whom had not left him for a single moment since he deserted her, now indeed proves to possess what Agathon in his enamoured exaltation divined in her: a beautiful soul. After Agathon's disappearance, she had broken up her household and quietly left Smyrna. She retired to a lonely country-house near Tarentum. Here she was still living, heart-broken and in utter seclusion from the world, when Agathon was drawn to these parts. By a chance they meet;[51] and at once his passionate love for her flames up with renewed intensity.

"He threw himself at her feet, he embraced her knees, he attempted to look at her, and sank, unable to bear the sight, upon her lap, his face flooded with tears. Danae could doubt no longer that she was loved still, and she had difficulty in repressing the rapture into which this certainty transported her. Agathon was still unable to speak; and what could he have said? 'I am contented, Agathon,' she said with a voice which against her will betrayed how hard it was for her to suppress her tears, 'I am contented! You have found a friend, and I hope you will find her in future less unworthy of your respect than before. No excuses my friend' (for Agathon started to say something which looked like an apology), 'for you will hear no reproaches from me. Let me enjoy in all its purity the delight of having found you again. It is the first pleasure which has come to me since our separation.'"

Nothing seems to stand in the way of a final reunion of the lovers. But Danae resolves to atone for her former life by a noble resignation, and Agathon, after a hard struggle with himself, at last lives up to her moral heroism.[52]

"The fundamental features of the soul are unchangeable. A beautiful soul may go astray, it may be blinded by deceptive visions; but it cannot cease to be a beautiful soul. Let the magic

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[51] *Werke* III, 119 ff.

[52] *Ib.* 132.—For the expression 'beautiful soul' cf. Erich Schmidt, *Richardson, Rousseau, Goethe, p.* 318 ff.

mist be dispersed, let the soul come to know the divineness of virtue! This is the moment when it comes to know itself, when it feels that virtue is not an empty name, not a creation of fancy, not an invention of deceit—that it is the vocation, the duty, the delight, the glory, the highest goal of a rational being. The love of virtue, the desire to transform itself in accordance with this divine ideal of moral beauty, now takes hold of all its instincts; it becomes a passion; in this state more than in any other the soul can be said to be possessed by deity; and what trial is too hard, what sacrifice too great for the enthusiasm engendered by this feeling?"

Artistically, some of Wieland's later works are superior to *Agathon*. His *Die Abderiten* (1774) will forever be the classic representation of German provincial town life in the eighteenth century, with all its insipidity, self-importance, and involuntary humour. There are few happier inventions in all comic literature than the lawsuit about the donkey's shadow, which,[53] instituted by the animal's driver against one of his customers, gradually sets the whole town in motion, disturbing the peace of families, calling out the most violent party hatred, and threatening to overthrow the very foundations of government. And nothing could be more striking than the reception[54] which the one common-sense and independent man of Abdera, the philosopher Democritus, is accorded when after long and extended travels he returns to his native town. Everybody is craving to hear him tell of giants and dwarfs, of one-eyed or four-footed men, and other marvellous things which they know he must have seen, because they know they exist. Democritus is sincere enough to confess that he never saw or heard of such things. "What, then, *have* you seen," said Sir Paunch, one of Abdera's aldermen, "you, who for twenty years have careered about the world, if you haven't seen any of the marvellous things which are to be found in foreign countries?" "Marvellous?" answered

Die Abderiten.

[53] *Abderiten b.*4; *Werke* VIII, 9–84. [54] *Ib. b.*1; *Werke* VII, 21 ff.

Democritus with a smile; "I had so much to do with the observation of the natural, that I had no time left for the marvellous." Whereupon his audience very properly leave him to his own sense of shame and contrition.

Musarion.

Among Wieland's poetical works, *Musarion* (1768) is undoubtedly one of the most graceful and delicate impersonations of his imperturbable serenity and optimism, and of the "charming philosophy" of enlightenment and toleration[55]—

Die, was Natur und Schicksal uns gewährt,
Vergnügt geniesst und gern den Rest entbehrt,
Die Dinge dieser Welt gern von der schönen Seite
Betrachtet, dem Geschick sich unterwürfig macht,
Nicht wissen will was Alles das bedeute,
Was Zeus aus Huld in rätselhafte Nacht
Vor uns verbarg, und auf die guten Leute
Der Unterwelt, so sehr sie Toren sind,
Nie böse wird, nur lächerlich sie find't,
(Und *sich* dazu), sie drum nicht minder liebet,
Den Irrenden bedau'rt und nur den Gleissner flieht,
Nicht stets von Tugend *spricht*, noch, von ihr sprechend, glüht,
Doch, ohne Sold und aus Geschmack, sie übet.

Oberon.

And in all later Romanticism, there is no work which in brilliancy of imagination, in lightness of movement, in crystalline clearness of action, and in golden worth of sentiment[56] surpasses the ever youthful romance of *Oberon* (1780) with its changing pictures[57] "of rustic simplicity and oriental splendour, of city tumult and hermit life, of fearful deserts and elysian meadows, of knightly combats and magic dances, of joyful feasts and miserable shipwreck," of delight and grief, hope and de-

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[55] *Werke* IV, 42.

[56] Cf. Goethe's letter to Lavater of July 3, 1780; *Briefe von Goethe an Lavater* ed. Hirzel *p.* 89. Of Wieland's other poetical romances *Geron der Adelich* (1777; *Werke* IV, 117 ff.) is the best.

[57] Cf. *Werke* I, 37.

spair, of heroism, constancy, friendship, and the final triumph of a stout and trusting heart.

And yet, with all the fuller development of literary skill and artistic finish which later years ripened in Wieland, the true inwardness of his activity, his peculiar significance as a typical representative of his time, was never more clearly brought to the front than in *Agathon.* It is impossible not to see here the first blossoming out of that spirit which was to mature its finest fruit in Goethe's *Faust.* A supreme interest in the problems of inner experience, a supreme faith in the inviolability and sacredness of the individual soul, a supreme desire for harmonious cultivation of all its faculties, an ever ready sympathy even with the wayward and the sinner, an unwavering trust in the intrinsic goodness of human character, and a sublime indifference to passing defects and temporary veilings of its true self,—these are the elements from which the highest and best in the work of Schiller and Goethe sprang, and all of them we find at least foreshadowed in this early work of Wieland.[58]

Wieland's ideal of culture.

It is the faithfulness to these principles which gave dignity and purpose to a life which otherwise might have spent itself in trifling levity. It is this which made Wieland one of the foremost shapers of cultivated German opinion toward the end of the eighteenth century.[59] It is this which, with all his peacefulness of temper and adaptability of manner, forced him, too, into the front rank of fighters for popular justice and natu-

His liberalism.

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[58] Cf. Goethe's *Zum Andenken des edlen Dichters, Bruders u. Freundes Wieland* (1813); *Werke* XXVII, 2, *p.* 54 ff., and the *Maskenzug* of 1818; *Werke* XI, 330 ff.

[59] A curious instance of Wieland's influence on popular German thought in R. Fester, *Rousseau u. d. deutsche Geschichtsphilosophie p.* 39 f.—For Wieland's great literary magazine, *Der Teutsche Merkur* 1773-89 (1790-1810 *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur*), cf. Koberstein *l. c.* III, 123 f.

ral rights. For it is clear that what Wieland considers as the normal, natural, complete man cannot develop in the sphere of autocratic encroachments; and the hope of the race therefore must, according to his own premises, lie, for him, in the establishment and gradual expansion of legitimate freedom.

"If it is true," he says himself, in the admirable essay *On the Place of Reason in Matters of Faith* (1788),[60] "that this eighteenth century of ours may boast of some considerable advantages over all previous centuries, it is also true that we owe them exclusively to the freedom of thought and expression, to the propagation of a scientific and philosophic spirit, and to the popularization of those truths on which the welfare of society depends. It may be that some eulogists of our age have made too much of these advantages. But if the blessings which we have derived from them are not greater, more extensive, and beneficial than they are—what is the cause of it, if it be not this: that the rights of reason still lack recognition in a good many countries of this hemisphere, and that even in those countries where there is the most light, they still find a most powerful and obstinate resistance in the prejudices, the passions, and the private interests of ruling parties, classes and orders.

"It cannot be too often repeated: Nothing of what men have ever publicly said, written, or done is exempted from the impartial and sober criticism of reason. No monarch is so great, no pontiff so sacred, that he might not commit follies which we should not be permitted to call what they are, namely, follies. It is true, children—as long as they are children—must be guided by authority.

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[60] *Werke* XXXII, 279.—The last comprehensive exposition of his views of life Wieland gave in his *Aristipp u. einige s. Zeitgenossen* (1800–1802; *Werke* XXV-XXVIII. Especially interesting the discussion of Plato's *Republic*; *book* IV, *c.* 4 ff.)

But it is in the nature of things that a child with every added year comes to be less of a child. It has in itself all that is needed to bring it to maturity, to the perfection of its individual nature; and it is wrong for its superiors, from selfish motives, to hinder its development. If, then, what we call people is a sort of collective child (a current conception which is not altogether without foundation), then it must be true of this child what is true of all children: it must be given every opportunity to develop into intelligent manhood. What need we fear from light? What can we hope from darkness? If diseased eyes are not able to bear the light, well, we must try to heal them, and they will certainly learn how to bear the light."

4. Lessing.

We have seen how from the Reformation to the middle of the eighteenth century whatever there was progressive in German thought tended, on the one hand, toward a disintegration of the collective forces of an outworn society; on the other, toward the unfolding of isolated independent individuals, the germ-bearers of a new social order. In Frederick the Great, the enlightened autocrat; in Klopstock, the exalted idealist; in Wieland, the man of universal culture, we found representative types of this individualistic development. We shall now consider a man who, while combining in himself the enlightenment, the idealism, the universality of the best of his age, added to this an intellectual fearlessness and a constructive energy which have made him the champion destroyer of despotism and the master builder of lawful freedom: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781).

It must be admitted that Lessing's works, no less than those of Klopstock and Wieland, had a higher significance for his time than they have for ours. Among his dramas,

Minna von Barnhelm and *Emilia Galotti* are still unequalled models of psychological workmanship and are still holding their own on the German stage by the side of Goethe's and Schiller's plays. Yet this very excellence of workmanship makes us feel all the more the absence in them of that inner affinity to our own life which allows *Iphigenie* and *Wallenstein* to become a part of our moral nature. Lessing's dramas are too specific in tone and purpose to be a common and permanent possession of humanity. The conflict between love and honour which is represented in *Minna von Barnhelm* in so masterly a fashion cannot be fully understood by a society like ours whose conception of honour is so far removed from the military rigour of the official classes of Prussia. The motives which in *Emilia Galotti* impel the aged Odoardo to sacrifice the life of his daughter rather than that of the princely libertine who threatens to lay violent hands on her can be duly appreciated only by people who have themselves known what it is to live under a lawless tyranny. Even in *Nathan*, broad and nobly humane as its teaching is, there is an element of partisan invective, justified undoubtedly by the bigotry and narrowness of the orthodox Protestantism of Lessing's time, but which nevertheless detracts from its permanent and universal value.

Obstacles to a just appreciation of Lessing.

Nor can it be said that Lessing's theoretical views on art, poetry, and religion have still a very decided influence on the minds of thinking men. His vigorous attacks, in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, against the classic French drama were called forth and justified by the unnatural predominance of French taste and fashion in the contemporary German literature, and they were one of the foremost means of emancipating the German mind from slavish imitation of foreign models. But now that this emancipation has been completed, and that we may look upon the writers of the *siècle de Louis XIV.* not as idols, claiming unconditional worship, but as objects of judicious observa-

tion, we have no longer need of that absolute standard of criticism which enabled Lessing to overthrow those idols; and if we do not rank Corneille and Racine with Sophocles and Shakspere, we are none the less willing to acknowledge their measured greatness and statuesque beauty. Lessing's artistic views as set forth in his *Laokoon* went a great way toward clearing up the confusion, prevalent at his time, about the legitimate province of art and poetry. Lessing has fully demonstrated that each art follows its own laws, that the modes of expression in different arts must be different, that to engraft the principles of one art upon another destroys the main principle of all art: beauty. This lesson is by no means antiquated; Wagner's painful efforts at a musical expression of the purely intellectual, the failure of the pre-Raphaelites in attempting to paint lyrics, are striking instances of the truth of Lessing's observation. But the scope and range of æsthetic speculation has been so immensely widened since Lessing's days, so many new problems have arisen and are continually arising, that his teaching, true and suggestive as it is, does not hold the same attention now which it held a century ago. And a similar fate has befallen Lessing's theological views. It is not to be forgotten that, among all the Rationalists of his time, he was at once the most consistent and the least impetuous; that while dealing deadly blows to a bigoted and self-sufficient priesthood, he never joined the crusade of Voltaire and his followers for a wholesale extirpation of the church; and that while repudiating the right of any positive religion to claim an absolute worth, he willingly recognised the relative worth of all. But theological research has made so vast a progress during the last hundred years, the field of religious investigation has become so enlarged, that Lessing's influence, although virtually not diminished, is less evident now than before.

While we thus cannot help being conscious of the barriers which prevent us from seeing Lessing himself in his

true stature, we are yet near enough to his time to realize that he has done more than any other of his contemporaries to solve the problems of literary and artistic reform, of social progress, of religious emancipation, which are still agitating the world; and that whatever there is of positive, constructive liberalism in German life of to-day has sprung more directly from him than from any other man of his age.

Constructive character of his work.

The struggle against Pseudo-classicism.

Lessing began his career as a literary critic by destroying what may be called Gottschedianism.

"'Nobody,' say the editors of the Library,[61] 'will deny that the German stage owes a large part of its first improvements to Professor Gottsched.'. . . I am this Nobody; I deny it point blank. It were to be wished that Mr. Gottsched had never meddled with the German stage. His pretended improvements either concern irrelevant trifles or are outright changes for the worse. To see the wretched condition of our present dramatic literature, it was not necessary to be a mind of the very highest order. Nor was Mr. Gottsched the first one to see it; he was only the first one who thought himself capable of reforming it. But how did he set to work in this? His ambition was not so much to improve our drama as to create a new one. And what sort of a new one? A Frenchified one; without asking himself whether this Frenchified drama was suited to the German temper or not. From the very works of our old dramatic literature, which he ostracized, he might have learned that we are much more akin to the English than to the French taste; that we want more food for observation and thought than the timid French tragedy gives us; that the grand, the terrible, the melancholy appeals more to us than the gallant, the delicate, the amorous; that too great simplicity tries us more than too great complexity, and so forth. He ought to have followed out this line of thought, and it would have led him straightway to the English stage.

"If the masterpieces of Shakspere, with a few slight altera-

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[61] The *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften u. freien Künste*, 1757–65, edited by Nicolai, Mendelssohn, and Chr. Fel. Weisse; after 1765 continued by Weisse under the title *Neue Bibl.* etc.

tions, had been made accessible to our German public, I am convinced that better results would have followed than could follow from the introduction upon our stage of Corneille and Racine. In the first place, Shakspere's works would have appealed much more to the people than those of Corneille and Racine possibly could; and secondly, the former would have aroused quite different minds among us from those whom the latter have awakened. For genius can be kindled only by genius; especially by a genius which seems to owe everything to nature, and which does not frighten us away by the laborious perfections of art. Even if we apply the standard of the ancients, Shakspere is a far greater tragic poet than Corneille; although the latter knew the ancients very well, and the former hardly at all. Corneille is nearer them in the outward mechanism, Shakspere in the vital essence of the drama. The Englishman almost always reaches the goal of tragedy, however erratic and untrodden paths he may choose; the Frenchman hardly ever reaches it, although he follows in the beaten track of the ancients."

In these words, from the first of Lessing's critical reform manifestoes, the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*,[62] which, in common with Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn, he edited in 1759 and 1760, we have the first unmistakable indication of the way in which he was to lead modern German literature. That he did a personal injustice to Gottsched by refusing to see any merit in the latter's endeavours for the purification and elevation of the German stage, there is no doubt. But it was the kind of injustice which seems to be inseparable from the strong assertion of a new and victorious principle against the representatives of an old and decrepit system of belief. Gottsched, with all his zeal for what he considered the advancement of good taste, with all his outward success and influence, with all his literary triumphs and honours, was essentially a man

[62] 17. *Brief; Werke* Hempel IX, 79 ff. Cf. Erich Schmidt, *Lessing* I, 410 ff.—For Nicolai cf. J. Minor, *Lessings Jugendfreunde; DNL.* LXXII, 275 ff.; for Mendelssohn, J. Minor, *Popularphilosophen d.* 18 *Jhdts; ib.* LXXIII, 213 ff.

of the past, a representative of the soulless and pretentious seventeenth-century absolutism; while in the young "Nobody" Lessing there was teeming the hope and enthusiasm of a people ready to throw off the fetters of courtly etiquette and to declare its literary and intellectual, if not its political, independence. And it is clear that this aim could be attained only by the annihilation of those who stood in its way.

The discovery of true classic antiquity.

Gottsched was the first one to fall; he was followed by the whole school of Pseudo-classicism which now for more than two centuries had kept the genuinely classic out of sight. The discovery of true classic antiquity; the reconstruction of its real beauty and greatness; the reform of modern art and literature, not through a slavish imitation of its forms, but through an active assimilation and adaptation of its principles; in short, the reassertion and fuller development of the ideals for which in the beginning of the sixteenth century the Humanists had fought,—this was the second and decisive step in Lessing's critical career, marked by *Laokoon* (1766) and the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767).

Laokoon.

Goethe, in an often quoted passage of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*,[63] has testified to the liberating influence which the *Laokoon* exercised upon his generation. "One must be a youth," he says, "to realize the effect produced upon us by Lessing's *Laokoon*, which transported us from the region of petty observation into the free fields of thought. The '*ut pictura poesis*' so long misunderstood was at once set aside; the difference between art and poetry was made clear; the summits of both appeared separated, however near each other might be their bases. The artist was to confine himself within the limits of the beautiful; while to the poet, who cannot ignore whatever there is significant in any sense, it was given to roam into wider fields.

[63] *Book* 8; *Werke* XXI, 95 f.

The former labours for the external sense, which is satisfied only with the beautiful; the latter for the imagination, which may come to terms even with the ugly. As by a flash of lightning, all the consequences of this striking thought were revealed to us; all previous criticism was thrown away like a worn-out coat."

Let us try to understand wherein consisted the peculiar value for Lessing's contemporaries of the thought contained in his *Laokoon.*

Winckelmann. Greek art as a reflex of Greek life.

Eleven years before its publication, there had appeared a work which for the first time brought out the true essence of Greek art and its vital relation to the modern world: Winckelmann's *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Kunstwerke* (1755). Winckelmann found in Greek life the source and prototype of Greek art. He showed how climate, race, religion, customs, political institutions, in short all the inner and outer conditions of Greek civilization combined to produce, as its finest flower, consummate works of art. He pointed to the inherent tendency of Greek art toward the typical, the ideal. He recognised[64] as its universal characteristic "a noble simplicity and calm grandeur." "As the deep of the ocean remains ever quiet, even though its surface be in an uproar, thus the Greek statues reveal with all their passion a soul at rest. Laocoon, in the statue, does not break into cries as Vergil's Laocoon does; bodily pain

[64] Cf. for the following Winckelmann's *Ged. über d. Nachahmung d. Griech. Werke in d. Malerei u. Bildhauerkunst; DLD. nr.* 20, *p.* 24 ff. In striking contrast with the essentially liberal thought pervading this essay are the adulatory phrases of the dedication which precedes it—phrases more suited to a Gottsched than a Winckelmann. It seems as though we saw two epochs meet in this youthful production of Winckelmann's: on the one hand the old submission to seventeenth-century absolutism, on the other the new life born from the emancipation movement of the eighteenth century. Cf. Carl Justi, *Winckelmann* I, 384.

and mental greatness are kept in balance, as it were, throughout his frame; we wish we might be able to bear misery like this great man." In truth, Greek art is the reflex of an inner vision; it does not imitate nature, but lifts itself above nature; it creates gods. Thus the hand of Greek artists has brought forth forms, freed from human necessity, rising into the sphere of pure beauty, awakening no desire, but, like an idea conceived without the help of the senses, transporting the mind into a dream of blissful ecstasy.

What a contrast with us moderns, who, surrounded by ugliness, oppressed by artificiality, overwhelmed with sterile learning, have lost our artistic equilibrium, and are helplessly drifting about in a sea of meaningless mannerisms! But what a lesson also! For is it not clear that in order to produce works of art like the Greeks, we must learn to feel like the Greeks, to live like the Greeks, to be like the Greeks, that is, as noble, as free, as well balanced, as true to our own nature as they?

The laws of sculptural and poetic beauty as revealed by the ancients.

The superiority of Greek idealism over rococo formalism, which Winckelmann in his intuitive, far-reaching manner had divined rather than proven, Lessing demonstrated in a more concise fashion, in a more limited field. He introduced us into the workshops of the ancient artists and poets. He showed us not only *that*, but also *how* they had come to be unequalled models of artistic perfection. As Winckelmann rightly observed, the sculptors of the Laocoon group represent the hero, not as breaking into cries, but as sighing only. But why? Not, as Winckelmann thought, because crying to the Greeks appeared unworthy of a man,—on the contrary, to suppress the affections seemed to them the sign of a barbarian,—but because it would have offended the laws of sculptural beauty to show a face with muscles violently and permanently distorted. Vergil, on the other hand, *did* represent Laocoon as crying, not because he had a dif-

ferent conception of his character, but because the laws of poetic beauty allowed him to introduce a sight, impressive through its contrast with what preceded and what followed, and robbed of its repulsive features through the fleetness of its appearance. Here, then, we have the secret of the wonderful workmanship of the ancients. They observe, not the capricious dictates of external conventions, but the natural and inherent laws of art, each in its own sphere.

How does Homer produce his effects? Not, as our pseudo-classic poets do, by attempting to paint, that is, by heaping epithets, by throwing elaborate descriptions of character or situations on the canvas, but by simple narrative, by continual motion, by resolving coexistent conditions into successive actions. Homer does not analyze the beauty of Helen, but relates how she affected even the old men of Troy when she appeared among them on the city walls.[65] He does not describe the shield of Achilles as completed, but makes us witness its completion under the hands of Hephæstus.[66] He does not dwell on the condition produced in the camp of the Greeks by the plague sent upon them by Apollo, but he shows the god himself descending in his wrath from Mount Olympus.[67] "With every step the arrows resound in his quiver. He strides along like the night. He sits himself in front of the ships. He sends his first arrow upon the mules and dogs, the second, more poisonous, upon the men—and everywhere flame the funeral-pyres heaped with corpses."

How did the Greek artists produce their effects? Not, as our modern naturalists and mannerists do, by trying to vie with the poet, that is, by bringing before the senses figures and scenes which are tolerable only to the fugitive imagination, but by selecting moments and situations which can be thought of as stable, as permanent, or which, if passing, are

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[65] *Laokoon* XXII, *Werke* VI, 133.

[66] *Ib.* XVIII, *l. c.* 113. [67] *Ib.* XIII, *l. c.* 93.

at least suggestive of other portentous moments and situations. Thus Medea was represented by Timomachus, not in the moment of murdering her children, but before the murder, as being torn by the conflicting passions of motherly love and the desire for revenge—a conflict which might well be imagined as lasting; the raging Ajax was shown, not in his mad onslaught upon the cattle-herd, but *after* the onslaught, cowering in despair on the ground and brooding over what he had done. In these pictures we have the true Medea and the true Ajax.[68] But a waterfall represented in marble ceases to be a waterfall and becomes a block of ice; a fleeting smile arrested on canvas ceases to be a smile and becomes a grin; and the frequency of these and similar subjects in rococo art shows its fundamental perversity and corruption.

The Hamburgische Dramaturgie.

While Lessing thus in the *Laokoon* brushed away the misinterpretations and arbitrary rules in which pseudo-classicism had buried the works of classic sculpture and poetry, bringing to light their true human outline and their true value for a regeneration of modern art and literature, he was at the same time preparing himself to rescue the classic drama from a similar perversion and to bring about the final overthrow of pseudo-classicism on the German stage. The one fact that not a few of the weapons with which in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* Lessing made his fierce attack against the French drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had come from the critical forge of Diderot,[69] ought to warn us against seeing the chief significance of this work in the checking of French taste or the widening of English influence. Nor ought we to consider its vital problem the question whether Corneille or Shakspere came nearer the

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[68] *Laokoon* III, *l. c.* 32 f.

[69] For Lessing's relation to Diderot cf. Erich Schmidt, *Lessing* II, 41 ff. 102. 113 f. Sime, *Lessing* I, 208–10.

standard of tragedy as attained by Sophocles and defined by Aristotle. What Lessing was battling against was not so much the French drama, as the spirit of despotic conventionalism and false propriety which during the last hundred years had been the ruling taste in England no less than in France or Germany. And what he was contending for was not so much a correct view of the Greek theory of tragedy, as the spirit of true humanity and sound nature which had made Sophocles and Shakspere possible, and for the propagation of which the best men in the last hundred years in France no less than in Germany or England had been struggling.

Its place in the movement for popular emancipation.

Only by thus detaching from the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* what is merely national, and by directing our chief attention upon its universally human features, are we enabled to see what it really was: a part of the universal eighteenth-century movement for popular emancipation.

This is the meaning of the attack against the 'three unities' and their hollow tyranny which had reduced the average drama of the time to a mere puppet-show.[70] This is the meaning of the attempt, in consonance with the true teaching of Aristotle, to establish the natural laws of tragic poetry as a representation of human character and fate, calling forth a violent discharge of the emotions, and by this very process purifying them.[71] This is the meaning of the constant appeal to the greatness of the Greek drama and of Shakspere in contrast with the pettiness and insignificance of modern productions.[72]

"It is well known how much in earnest the Greek and Roman peoples were with their theatre; especially the Greeks, with tragedy. How indifferent, how cold, on the contrary, are our

[70] *Hamb. Dramat. St.* 44–46 ; *Werke* VII, 241 ff.
[71] *Ib. St.* 37. 38. 74–79. 81. 82 ; *l.c.* 210 ff. 364 ff. 394 ff.
[72] *Ib. St.* 80 ; *l.c.* 388.

people in regard to the theatre! Whence this difference, if it does not arise from the fact that the Greeks were inspired by their stage with feelings so strong, so extraordinary, that they could scarce await the moment for experiencing them again and again; while we receive from our stage such weak impressions that we seldom think it worth the time and money to secure them? We go to the theatre almost all, almost always, from curiosity, from fashion, from *ennui*, from a desire for society, from a wish to stare and to be stared at; and only a few, and these few seldom, from other motives. I say, we, our people, our stage; I do not mean, however, only the Germans. We Germans are honest enough to confess that as yet we have no theatre. What many of our critics who subscribe to this confession and at the same time are great admirers of the French theatre are thinking of in forming such a judgment, I know not; but I know what I myself think of it. I think that not only we Germans, but also that those who for a century have boasted of having a drama, the best drama in all Europe—that even the French have no drama. No tragedy, certainly! For the impression which French tragedy produces is so shallow, so cold!"

Shakspere, on the other hand, affects us deeply, because he, like the Greek tragic poets, represents human nature at its highest, and thus heightens our own self. While the feeble correctness of French tragedy has invited a host of successful imitators, he in his lonely grandeur defies all imitation, but through this very fact calls out the rivalry of genius.[73]

"What has been said of Homer, that it would be easier to rob Hercules of his club than to take a verse from him, is perfectly true also of Shakspere. Upon the smallest of his beauties a stamp is impressed which cries out to the whole world: 'I am Shakspere's!' And woe to any other beauty which has the audacity to place itself beside his! Shakspere must be studied, not plundered. If we have genius, Shakspere must be to us what the camera obscura is to the landscape-painter. Let him look diligently into it, to learn how nature projects itself in all cases upon a flat surface; but let him not attempt to borrow from it."

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[73] *Hamb. Dramat. St.* 73; *l. c.* 362.

Lessing's patriotism.

We have emphasized in Lessing's literary and artistic criticism the tendencies connecting him with the great current of freedom, the spread of which through the whole of Europe and beyond it forms the most remarkable phenomenon of the eighteenth century. But it would be shutting one's eyes to an apparent fact, not to see that Lessing was in equally close contact with another great movement which, as we have already seen in Klopstock, was intimately allied with the eighteenth-century struggle for freedom, and which was destined to become the dominant factor in the history of the nineteenth century: the movement for national consolidation. Indeed, it is this very blending of cosmopolitan breadth and patriotic warmth, of republican fearlessness and monarchical discipline, that gives to most of Lessing's productions their masculine vigour and intensity. He declined to beat the Prussian war-drum with the shallow enthusiasm of a Ramler[74]; he did not hesitate to express his indignation at the despotic methods of Frederick's government[75]; he would in a moment of disgust and impatience speak of patriotism as "an heroic weakness," and disclaim for himself the name of a patriot.[76] But what else than patriotism, what else than the feeling which animated the Prussian army at Rossbach was it when, in the concluding article of the *Dramaturgie*, he wrote[77]: "What a simple idea to give the Germans a national theatre, while we Germans are as yet no nation! I do not speak of the political constitution, but only of the moral character. One might almost say: the character of the Germans is to insist on having none of their own. We are still the sworn imitators of everything foreign, especially the humble admirers of the never-enough-admired French. Everything from beyond the Rhine is

[74] Cf. Erich Schmidt *l. c.* I, 294 f.

[75] Cf. letter to Nicolai *nr.* 178; *Werke* XX. 1, *p.* 330.

[76] Cf. letters to Gleim *nr.* 77. 78; *l. c.* 170. 173.

[77] *St.* 101; *Werke* VII, 474.

beautiful, charming, lovely, divine; we would rather disown sight and hearing than think otherwise; we will rather persuade ourselves to accept coarseness for naturalness, frivolity for grace, grimace for expression, a tingling of rhymes for poetry, howling for music, than in the smallest degree doubt the superiority in all that is good and beautiful and sublime and becoming, which this charming nation, this first nation of the world, as it is accustomed very modestly to call itself, has received as its share from a just Providence."

The political aspect of Lessing's dramas.

Nowhere more forcibly than in his dramas has Lessing manifested this twofold quality of his work as standing both for cosmopolitan freedom and for national dignity. Indeed it is not too much to say that nearly every one of his dramas marks an important step in either of these directions, if not in both. In *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755), the first German tragedy of common life, he emancipated the German stage from the absurd pseudo-classic prejudice that the representation of elevated feeling and deep emotion should be restricted to the sphere of kings and princes,—thus accomplishing for his own country what Lillo and Steele had done before him in England, what Nivelle de la Chaussée, Diderot, and others had attempted in France. In *Philotas* (1759) he impersonated, although in Greek disguise, the spirit of heroism and unswerving devotion to king and country which made the Prussia of the Seven Years' War.[77a] In *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) he created the first unquestionably and unconditionally German characters of the modern German stage, characters charged, as it were, with a sturdy individuality, and at the same time types of a people beginning to feel itself again as a whole, and to be again conscious of national responsibilities. In *Emilia Galotti* (1772) he gave voice to popular indignation at the oppression of the middle classes through a corrupt and vicious aristocracy, thus

[77a] It was not until three years later that Thomas Abbt wrote his enthusiastic essay *Vom Tode fürs Vaterland* (1761).

opening the battle which was to be carried on in the 'Sturm und Drang' movement, and which, in the classic days of Weimar and Jena, was to bring about the German counterpart to the French Revolution: the supplanting of the old aristocracy, based on birth and privilege, by a new aristocracy of intellect and culture.

Tellheim and Odoardo as public characters.

Let us examine somewhat more closely at least two of Lessing's dramatic characters—Tellheim, the lover of Minna von Barnhelm; Odoardo, the father of Emilia Gallotti—which bring out in a most emphatic manner this twofold principle of cosmopolitanism and nationality, of freedom and discipline.

Tellheim a type of the Prussia of Frederick the Great.

Tellheim is a soldier without a grain of the hireling in him. "A man must be a soldier"—he says[78]—"for his country, or for love of the cause for which he is fighting. To serve without a purpose, to-day here, to-morrow there, is to hire himself out as a butcher, nothing else." He has found out by personal experience[79] that "the service of the great is dangerous, and does not repay the trouble, the want of freedom, the humiliation it costs. I became a soldier from predilection, I know not for what political maxims, and from a whim that it was good for every honest man to try this profession for a time, to familiarize himself with everything called danger, and to learn coolness and determination. Utter necessity only would have compelled me to make of this experiment a vocation, of this occasional employment a trade." And nothing is more significant of his feelings than the abrupt exclamation called forth by a chance mention of the Moor of Venice.[80] "But pray tell me, madame, how did the Moor come to be in the Venetian service? Had the Moor no fatherland? Why did he lend his arm and his blood to a foreign state?"

Honour is his highest law, but it is the true honour of a

[78] *Minna v. B.* (*Werke* II) III, 7. [79] *Ib.* V, 9 [80] *Ib.* IV, 6

man controlling his own desires, ready to sacrifice himself for his fellows, in touch with every human feeling; not the false, pretentious honour of a selfish, conceited high-caste official. What genuine manliness he displays in the scene[81] where he, the poor, discharged officer, who has just been forced by a greedy landlord to quit his lodgings, refuses to acknowledge the debt which the widow of one of his comrades comes to pay him! He knows that the woman has sold everything in order to raise the necessary sum, he knows that she has a son to bring up, and his decision is quick and simple—"Would you have me rob the untutored orphan of my friend?" Then, after the widow has left him, he takes the bill of debt from his pocket-book. "Poor, excellent woman! I must not forget to destroy this trifle."

What a picture of noble constraint and self-renunciation when after a separation of months and years he for the first time meets Minna again![82] When they were engaged, he had every reason to believe that he could make her happy. He was in the full possession of his power; an officer in the proudest army of Europe; a life of honour and success seemed before him. Since then fate has pursued him. A shot has lamed his right arm; at the conclusion of the Hubertusburg peace he has been discharged; a suspicion—baseless to be sure—has been cast upon his character. Not willing to inflict his misfortune upon the woman whom he loves, the proud man has fled from her, he has tried to forget her, and now she has come to make him her own.

"*Tellheim:* You, here? What are you seeking madame?

Minna: I am seeking nothing—now (*approaching him with open arms*). All I sought I have found.

Tellheim (*shrinking from her*): You sought a fortunate man, a man worthy of your love; and find—a wretch.

Minna: Then you love me no longer? and you love another?

Tellheim: Ah! he never loved you, madame, who after you can love another.

Minna: You draw only one thorn from my heart. If I have

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[81] *Minna v. B.* I, 6. 7. [82] *Ib.* II, 9.

lost your love, what matters it whether indifference or more powerful charms robbed me of it? You love me no longer, and you do not love another? Unhappy man! not to love at all!

Tellheim: Right, madame. The unfortunate man must not love at all. He deserves his misfortune if he does not gain this victory over himself; if he can allow himself to let those whom he loves share his misfortune.—How hard is this victory!—Since reason and necessity bade me forget Minna von Barnhelm, what pains have I endured in order to forget her! I was just beginning to hope that these pains would not be forever fruitless—and you appear, madame."

And finally, the change of his attitude in the last act, brought about through Minna's innocent deception in representing herself as disinherited and helpless.[83] How the loyalty, the self-sacrificing devotion of the man wells up at the thought that his life has an aim again, that the one whom he loves so deeply, and whom he dared not to make his own, needs his protection! "My soul has acquired new springs of action. My own misfortune depressed me, made me irritable, short-sighted, timid, sluggish. Her misfortune elevates me. I breathe afresh, and feel ready and strong enough to undertake anything for her." How eloquent this man of few words becomes, how he pleads with Minna, how he entreats her to accept his care! How the suppressed hopefulness of his nature reveals itself! "Is this country the world? Does the sun rise but here? Where might I not go? What service would refuse me? And if I am obliged to seek it in farthest lands, follow me with courage, dearest Minna, we shall want nothing." And when at last it appears that there is a place for him in his own country, when the suspicion that had been cast upon his honour is dispelled, when a new career of success and fame lies before him, it is again not the thought of himself, it is the thought of service for his beloved Minna that animates him. "Now that fortune has restored to me

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[83] *Minna v. B.* V, 2. 5. 9.

enough to satisfy the wishes of a reasonable man, it shall depend alone on my Minna whether I shall belong to any one but her. To her service alone shall my whole life be devoted. Minna is not one of those vain women who love their husbands for nothing but their rank and titles. She will love me for myself; and for her I shall forget the whole world."

In all this we observe the combination of two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand we see the after-effect of the turning away from public problems and interests which we have come to know as the main drift of German life from the Thirty Years' War to the age of Frederick the Great. Even Tellheim, the Prussian officer, has no more immediate interests than his private affairs, his personal relations to a small circle of individuals. But, on the other hand, we see the first signs of a new tide of public consciousness setting in. How different this individualism of the Lessingian type is from the weakly self-introspection of a Gellert, the refined self-complacency of a Wieland, or the ecstatic self-exaltation of a Klopstock. This individualism rests on self-control and self-surrender; this individualism is intimately allied with the proud self-abnegation, the unflinching loyalty, the thoroughly monarchical discipline to which the Prussia of Lessing's time owed all that it was, and which in our own days has become the final and decisive instrument in bringing about a new era of German national greatness.[84]

Odoardo a living protest against ancien régime society.

Odoardo is a character very similar to Tellheim. He has the same independence, courage, and earnestness of purpose; the same disciplined devotion to principle and honour; the same contempt for the glittering and the false. But there is one thing in Odoardo which makes him in a still more strik-

[84] It is well known that Tellheim's character is, in part at least, drawn after Lessing's friend, the Prussian major Ewald von Kleist, author of *Der Frühling*, who was mortally wounded in the battle of Kunersdorf, 1759. Cf. Erich Schmidt *l. c.* I, 473 ff.

ing manner than Tellheim a representative of this age of emancipation and reconstruction: a hatred of tyranny which cannot help being defiant, and a republican rigour which knows no compromise.

Nowhere does he display this more forcibly than in the manner in which he rescues his daughter from the snares of courtly corruption. As is well known, the prototype of Emilia Galotti is the Roman Virginia, of whom we read in Livy. Virginia is coveted by the decemvir Appius Claudius. In order to gratify his desires, he openly breaks through the most sacred restraints of the law, by wilfully adjudicating her to one of his clients. When the girl is about to be carried away into his service, the father asks for a last interview with his daughter, and to save her from slavery and shame, stabs her in the heart. This desperate deed, committed in the open market-place, kindles the latent indignation of the people at the tyranny of Appius into revolt; the decemvirs are thrown out of office; and Rome is free.

Emilia, the daughter of colonel Odoardo, excites the passion of the prince of Guastalla, her father's sovereign. In order to gratify the appetite of the princely libertine, the whole machinery of Macchiavellian intrigue and high-handed brutality at the disposal of an eighteenth-century autocrat is set in motion. On the morning of the day on which Emilia was to be wedded to the man of her choice the latter is murdered by hired bandits. Emilia herself, under the pretext of sheltering her, is separated from her family and taken to the prince's country-seat. Odoardo, informed of what has happened, hastens to his daughter's rescue. But finding that the meshes of the fiendish intrigue are too closely drawn, he sees no rescue for her but in death. He kills her with his own hand.

Up to this point the two cases are essentially the same; but here the similarity ends. Odoardo does not, like Virginius, call for the revenge of his daughter's blood, and his

deed does not, like that of Virginius, bring about a popular upheaval against tyrannical usurpation. He surrenders himself to the courts, and the prince, to all outward appearance, remains unpunished. It is this discrepancy from the Roman tradition, this substitution of private for public motives, which Lessing had in mind when he called [85] Emilia Galotti a *bourgeoise* Virginia. And it is this very departure which makes this tragedy, and particularly the character of Odoardo, in such an eminent manner representative of the period preceding the French Revolution.

No stronger indictment of the whole system of autocratic misrule has ever been written. This prince of Guastalla, a man for whom his subjects are nothing but so many opportunities for extortion, a man who will sign a death-warrant with the same unconcern with which he engages a singer or deserts a mistress,[86] an expert in the science of self-gratification, a master in the art of seduction and corruption, and with all this a mere tool in the hands of his omnipotent prime minister Marinelli; this Marinelli, an impersonation of unscrupulous rascality, incapable of conceiving motives that are not low and contemptible, a coward and a liar, a wretch too miserable even to have any strong passion or to indulge in any striking vice, a vampire in human form; this countess Orsina, the deserted mistress, a woman of parts and refinement, but signed with the stamp of lost innocence, consuming herself in the mad attempt to force the prince back into his former allegiance, a Pompadour transformed into a Messalina, a bacchante turned into a Fury,[87] —what a revelation of *ancien régime* society these characters contain !

And now, on the other side, Odoardo and his kin. He is a man of his own making. Having retired from the army,

[85] Cf. letter to Nicolai *nr.* 63; *Werke* XX, 1, *p.* 145. For the influence on Lessing of the *Virginia* by Samuel Crisp (1754) cf. G. Roethe in *Vierteljahrschr. f. Littgesch.* II, 520 ff.

[86] *Emilia Galotti* (*Werke* II) I, 8. [87] *Ib.* IV, 7.

where he had risen from a private to a colonel, he lives in quiet retreat at a modest country-seat near the capital, leaving it [88] "to the Marinellis to stoop, to flatter, and to cringe." His daughter is betrothed to the count Appiani, a man of equal sturdiness of character, who in spite of his aristocratic birth has decided to sever his connections with the court, and to lead henceforth the independent life of a country gentleman.[89] "Hardly can I wait for the moment when I shall call this worthy young man my son. Everything in him delights me; but above all his decision to live to himself in his ancestral valleys."

Into this prospect of a happy family idyll there breaks a sudden stream of vice and destruction, sent forth from the pestilent pool of court life. The violent passion of the prince for Emilia, the decision to obtain her at any cost, Marinelli's fiendish intrigue, culminating in the murder of Appiani and Emilia's abduction,—all these events follow each other in rapid, flashlike succession. When Odoardo, as yet ignorant of the full extent of what has happened, hastens to the castle in order to claim his daughter, he is met by the countess Orsina, who has come to seek revenge for the outrages committed by the prince against herself. She reveals to him the connection of events, she forces upon him the dagger which she has brought with her as a last resort. Half crazed with grief and wrath, as Odoardo is, his first impulse is to kill the prince himself. But he soon collects himself.[90] Is he to share in the revenge of a reprobate? Is he to punish one crime by committing another?

"What has injured virtue to do with the revenge of vice? The former only have I to rescue. And thy cause, my son, O my son!—thy cause a higher than I will make his own. Enough for me if thy murderer is not to enjoy the fruit of his crime. Let this torment him more than his crime! As he hastens on from lust to lust, driven by satiety and *ennui*, let the thought of having lost this prize embitter to him all the rest. In his every

[88] *Emilia Galotti* II, 4. [89] *Ib.* [90] *Ib.* V, 2.

dream may the blood-stained bridegroom appear before his bed, leading the bride on his arm; and when he stretches out his wanton hand for her, let him hear the scornful laughter of hell, and awake!"

In this mood, Odoardo comes to see that the attempt to free his daughter is in vain; and from her own lips he hears the most awful, the most crushing truth. Emilia does not feel sure of herself; even she, the modest, innocent girl, the daughter of an Odoardo, the betrothed of an Appiani, has been touched by the foul breath of courtly corruption. Like the dove charmed by the serpent's glance, she is in danger of losing her power of conscious motion, she feels herself that she might be resistlessly drawn into the gulf of seduction, and she herself sees her only salvation in death. And now the father hesitates no longer, he "plucks the rose before the storm scatters its leaves."

Artistically this dénouement, in spite of its masterly and thoroughly consistent representation, is undoubtedly open to criticism. As an expression of political feeling nothing could be stronger. No more revolutionary, and at the same time conservative, character has been drawn than this man who disdains to take revenge with his own hand, knowing that the eternal justice of things will surely sweep away the whole system of foulness and usurpation under which his generation is smarting. No more stirring, though implicit, plea for popular freedom has been made than the words with which he surrenders himself to the authorities[91]: "There, prince! Does she still please you? Does she still excite your desire? Still, in this blood, that cries for vengeance against you?—I go, and give myself up to prison. I go, and await you as judge.—And then, yonder, —I await you before the Judge of us all!"

We have seen how Lessing, by destroying the pseudo-

[91] *Ib.* V, 8. For the influence of *Emilia* upon the Storm-and-Stress literature cf. Erich Schmidt *l. c.* II, 221 ff.

classic theory of art and poetry, opened the way for true classicism, which is identical with true humanism; we have seen how, by exposing in all their hideousness the evils of despotic usurpation, and by pointing at the same time to the true springs of national strength, he helped to reconstruct the social fabric of his age. It remains to glance at the services rendered by him to the cause of religious emancipation.

Lessing as religious reformer.

In Klopstock we saw the poetic climax of Pietism, in Wieland the literary reflex of Rationalism; Lessing's place is above either of these movements. To put it in a word, he was in the domain of religion what Winckelmann was in the domain of art. He foreshadowed, if he did not fully develop, that most powerful and most liberalizing of all modern ideas: the idea of organic growth. The whole of Lessing's religious thought is determined by the contrast between the positive or historic and the rational or ideal religion. The former, that is, religion as embodied in the great church organizations of history, conceives of God as an extra-mundane, supernatural being, ruling the world, his creation, after the fashion of an absolute monarch, arbitrarily enacting and cancelling laws, and making his will known to humanity by special decrees called revelations. The latter, that is, religion as it presents itself to the thinking individual, conceives of God as the inner life of the world, as the inherent unity, the immanent law of things, as a hidden spiritual force, of which our own feelings, thoughts, and actions are the truest revelations. That the latter view is the logical consequence and the consummation of Protestantism, while the former is its direct opposite and negation, can be as little questioned as it could be doubted to which of these views Lessing, the friend of the Deists, the admirer of Spinoza, naturally inclined. The remarkable thing is that, although unequivocally refusing to accept the belief in supernatural revelation for himself, he was far from denying the

The historic religions and the ideal religion.

services rendered to humanity by this very belief; and that, instead of joining the majority of Rationalists in condemning the positive religions as the inventions of shrewd and ambitious priests, he saw in them a succession of tentative efforts and a gradual approach toward the one and final, ideal religion.

Proof of this are the three principal stages of Lessing's religious activity: (1) the polemics against Goeze, (2) *Nathan the Wise*, and (3) *The Education of the Human Race.*

The controversy with Goeze.

Lessing's theological polemics against the *pastor primarius* Goeze of Hamburg and his adherents (1777–78) are among the few controversial writings of the world's literature which are creative rather than destructive. What interests us in them is not so much the annihilation of an arrogant and intolerant church dignitary—a type of society which may be crushed in individuals, but which as a class seems to be ineradicable; what interests us in them and moves us so profoundly is the assertion of a positive and vital principle of modern thought, the principle of free inquiry and unbiased, impartial research, even, or rather above all, in religious matters.

Vindication of free inquiry.

It was because Lessing felt bound to uphold this principle that he gave publicity in the so-called *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* to the radical views concerning the historical authenticity of the Bible and the origin of the Christian religion held by his friend Reimarus—views which he himself was far from sharing as a whole. It was because he saw this principle endangered that he arose in all his fearlessness and might against the storm of orthodox indignation and obloquy called forth by this publication. Nothing could excel the clearness with which Lessing in this controversy draws the line between the spirit and the letter, between religion and religious documents, between the endless motion of life and the petty narrowness of a selfish, stagnant formalism.

He conjures up[92] the shade of Luther, his intellectual ancestor and patron:

"Luther! great, misunderstood man! And by none more misunderstood than by the short-sighted bigots who, with thy slippers in their hands, shrieking but indifferent, loiter along the road trodden smooth by thee! Thou hast freed us from the yoke of tradition; who will free us from the more intolerable yoke of the letter? Who will at last bring us a Christianity such as thou wouldst now teach us, such as Christ himself would teach?"

He inveighs[93] with flaming words against those who from fear for their own safety and quiet wish to check all progress:

"O ye fools who would banish the hurricane from nature, because here it buries a ship in the sands, and there dashes another against a rocky coast. O ye hypocrites! for we know you. It is not for these unfortunate ships that you care, unless you had a mortgage on them; your thoughts are confined to your own little garden, your own little conveniences and pleasures. The wicked hurricane! Here it has unroofed a summer-house of yours, there rudely shaken loaded trees, there overturned your precious orangery, full seven earthen pots. What do you care how much good the hurricane otherwise effects in nature? Could it not do it without injuring your little garden? Why does it not blow past your hedge? or at least have its cheeks less full when it approaches your landmarks?"

He holds up, in that most characteristic and most powerful of all his utterances,[94] the image of the true seeker and path-finder:

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[92] *Das Absagungsschreiben; Werke* XVI, 102. If one wishes to have a vivid conception of the religious condition of the educated classes in Germany at the time of Lessing's controversy with Goeze, he should read Nicolai's novel *Sebaldus Nothanker* (1773–76), the *Robert Elsmere* of the eighteenth century. Cf. Gervinus, *Gesch. d. d. Dichtg* V, 262 f.

[93] *Antigoeze* III; *Werke* XVI, 155 ff.

[94] *Eine Duplik* (against one of Goeze's sympathizers, the Braunschweig superintendent Ress); *l. c.* 26.—Goeze, incapable of grasping

"Not the truth of which any one is, or supposes himself to be, possessed, but the upright endeavour he has made to arrive at truth, makes the worth of a man. For not by the possesion, but by the investigation, of truth are his powers expanded, wherein alone his ever-growing perfection consists. Possession makes us easy, indolent, proud.—If God held all truth shut in his right hand, and in his left hand nothing but the ever-restless instinct for truth, though with the condition of for ever and ever erring, and should say to me 'Choose!'—I should bow humbly to his left hand, and say, 'Father, give! pure truth is for Thee alone!'"

He compares[95] religion to an ancient palace of vast dimensions and mysterious architecture, about which there is a great deal of speculation going on among the townspeople. This speculation is based, not upon the knowledge of the palace itself, but upon a number of old plans, themselves couched in strange and hardly intelligible terms. Everybody takes the liberty to interpret the terms according to his own pleasure; everybody declares that his own interpretation of his plan solves the mystery of the palace. Once at midnight there suddenly rises the cry: "Fire! fire in the palace!" Everybody rushes from his bed and runs to save, not the palace, but his plan. The crowd gathers on the street. Everybody wants to point out on his plan to everybody else where he thinks the palace is burning. "See, neighbour, here it burns! Here we may best get at the fire." "No, neighbour, here!" "What are you both thinking of? It's on fire here!" "If it were burning there, it would be of no consequence; but the fire is here!" "Put

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the noble optimism of these words, wrote the following orthodox parody of them: "Wenn Gott mir in seiner Rechten den einzigen immer regen Trieb nach Wahrheit, aber mit dem Zusatze mich immer und ewig zu irren, und in der Linken das allerschröcklichste Schicksal, vernichtet zu werden, vorhielte und sagte: wähle!—so würde ich mit Zittern in seine Linke fallen, und sagen: Vater, vernichte mich!" *DLD. nr.* 43–45, *p.* 90. Cf. Erich Schmidt *l. c.* II, 459.

[95] *Eine Parabel; Werke* XVI, 94 ff.

it out there who will; I won't!" "Nor I here." "Nor I there." Through these busy squabblers, so Lessing concludes, the palace might really have burnt down, had it been on fire. But the terrified watchmen had mistaken for fire an aurora borealis.

In short, to quote the concise, pointed language of the *Axiomata*[96]:

"The letter is not the spirit, and the Bible is not religion. Consequently, criticisms of the letter and of the Bible are not necessarily criticisms of the spirit and of religion. There was religion before there was a Bible. Christianity existed before the evangelists and apostles wrote. The Christian religion is not true because the evangelists and apostles taught it; but the evangelists and apostles taught it because it is true."

Conservatism.

From all this it is clear that the underlying motive in Lessing's theological polemics was his conviction that the religious life of the modern world would be doomed if it renounced the right of rational inquiry and unprejudiced research. But it is equally clear that this conviction rested, not upon indifference to religious problems or upon hostility to the church, but on the very reverse: on a supreme interest in the true essence of religion and in all the religious phases and experiences of the past. It is this wonderful combination of boldness and reserve, of keenness and reverence, of fearless consistency of thought and conservative tenderness of feeling, which gives to these theological polemics all the charm and power of artistic creations, and has made them for the Protestant world what Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales* were for Catholicism: starting-points of a new life within the old forms.

Forbidden by the state authorities to pursue the controversy with Goeze any further, Lessing returned once more

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[96] *Axiomata*; *l. c.* 113 ff.

to his "old pulpit," the stage, and created in *Nathan the Wise* (1779) the finest symbol of eighteenth-century enlightenment.

Nathan der Weise.

Here again, Lessing is far from preaching indifference to religious forms and traditions. In the parable of the three rings,[97] which stands in the centre of the whole drama, something very different is taught. The magic ring which is transmitted from generation to generation, making its owner master of the house and "pleasing to God and man," exercises its hidden power only when worn by a confident believer in this power. In other words, faith in transmitted conceptions, trust in accepted symbols, is a necessary element of religious life.—When in course of time the magic ring is lost, or rather, when its genuineness is contested by the possessors of two other rings resembling it in every particular, what is the verdict of the judge to whom the case is submitted? "Let every one of you believe his own ring the genuine one!" In other words, the religion which was handed down to us by our fathers, in which we and our people live, which has become a part of ourselves, this is the natural and most precious object of our veneration and love; this ought to be made by every one of us the starting-point of our higher life.

The parable of the rings.

But while Lessing thus, on the one hand, asserts the legitimacy and reasonableness of religious distinctions, he points at the same time to the common aim of all religions. The magic ring had the power to make one "pleasing to God and man." Do not the other rings, or rather their owners, have the same power? Is not this the proper test

[97] *Nathan* (*Werke* III) III, 7. As is well known, Lessing took the raw material of this parable from Boccaccio's *Decamerone* I, 3. The points mentioned in the following paragraph are Lessing's own. An excellent discussion of the subject in Kuno Fischer, *Lessing als Reformator d. deutschen Litteratur* II, 38 ff. A full account of the mediæval affiliations of the tale is given by Erich Schmidt *l.* c. II, 491 ff.

of superiority? Is there not here a field for a nobler contest than the wrangling about the genuineness or spuriousness of the rings? a contest in enlightenment, toleration, beneficence, devotion, love? In other words, is not every religion capable of being made a stepping-stone to noble humanity? Is not the striving for human perfection a ground on which all religions may meet? And may we not hope for a time, should we not help to prepare it, when the question: what do you believe? will be superseded by the question: what are you?

This, then, is the great lesson of the parable. Let us not presume to throw over as worthless the faith bequeathed to us by our ancestors; nor expect others to abandon their faith for ours. Let every one cherish his own. But let every one indeed cherish, that is, cultivate, refine, spiritualize, his own. Let him try to make it the best, the finest expression of true humanity; let him strive to be a living prophecy of the coming ideal religion.[98]

The characters.

And now the application of this lesson in the characters of the drama itself. Kuno Fischer has admirably shown[99] how they range in a gradually ascending line from the lowest type of brutal fanaticism, represented by the Patriarch, through the narrow conventionalism of Daja, the aggressive independence of the Templar, the humble piety of the Friar, the serene world-contempt of the Dervis, the large-minded generosity of Saladin and Sittah, the tender susceptibility and instinctive nobility of

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[98] Lessing was well aware of the fact that the masses were not yet ripe for his own noble cosmopolitanism. He hoped, with the best of his time, for a gradual spread of enlightenment, from the educated few downward. Hence the interest taken by him in the progress of Freemasonry, in which he saw the first symptom of the coming brotherhood of all nations and all religions. Cf. the masterly little dialogues *Ernst und Falk, Gespräche für Freimaurer* (1778. 1780; *Werke* XVIII, 135 ff.).

[99] *Lessing als Ref.* II, 88 ff.

Recha, to the highest form of enlightened virtue represented by Nathan. Here it must suffice to say a few words about Nathan himself.

Nathan.

Nathan has been born a Jew, he calls himself a Jew, to a certain extent he *is* a Jew. He respects the faith of his forefathers, he has a heart for his race; he has the instinct and capacity of his race for business. His conduct is by no means without the defects characteristic of his race. There is a certain shrewdness in him which sometimes comes near making us doubt the depth of his feelings. He has a fondness for dialectics which occasionally makes him appear petty and hairsplitting. He is at times unable to repress a superior smile which seems to spring from a half-conscious, inherited instinct that his people is the chosen people of God, the people of promise and grace; and then, again, there is a humbleness, not to say servility, in his behaviour, which seems to tell of the humiliations and insults inflicted upon this most despised and down-trodden of all nations.

What is there in this man to make him the highest type of humane religion? It is this. Without ceasing to be a Jew, he has at the same time raised himself above the Jew. Although brought up in the most intolerant of beliefs, he has come to be the most tolerant of men. Slander, persecution, the saddest bereavement have only served to make him the most loving, the most serene, the wisest of men. He might have become a Shylock, and he did become—a Nathan.

Two scenes may be selected to show the inner beauty of this character, as it reveals itself to men of widely differing types: the haughty Templar and the humble, simple-minded Friar.

The Templar has by chance seen Nathan's daughter in danger of fire, and has rescued her. Too proud to accept thanks from a Jew, he has avoided meeting Nathan ever since. At last, Nathan, driven by sincere gratitude, ap-

proaches him on the street.[100] He offers him thanks, the Templar refuses it; he offers him money, the Templar answers with an insult. "Well, perhaps I'll borrow money from you when I need a new mantle. But don't be alarmed, my old one is still in tolerably good condition, except this burn here which it got when I carried your daughter through the fire." Nathan does not retort upon this gratuitous insult. He bows down upon the mantle and kisses the burnt spot. The Templar is perplexed and moved. "Who is this Jew to embarrass one by such refinement of feeling? But, after all, he is a Jew; after all, he belongs to that detestable people which first claimed God exclusively for itself, and which is responsible for all the intolerance and fanaticism of later, Christian times." When the Templar gives utterance to these feelings, Nathan cannot contain himself any longer. In this very indignation of the Christian knight, in his bitter arraignment of Jewish intolerance and exclusiveness, he recognises his own kindred, his own intellectual ally.

Come, come, we must, we must
Be friends! Despise my nation just as much
As pleases you. We neither of us chose
Our nation for ourselves. Are we our nation?
What is a nation? Are then Jew and Christian
First Jew and Christian, and but later, men?
Ah! if I had but found in you one more
To whom it is enough to be a man!

And now the Templar, too, casts away prejudice and conceit. In the despised Jew he has found a noble, superior man:

That have you, Nathan! Yes, by heaven, you have!
Your hand! I am ashamed but for one moment
To have mistaken you.

The scene with the Friar[101] leads us still more deeply into

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[100] *Nathan* II, 5. Trsl. by E. K. Corbett. [101] *Ib.* IV, 7.

the secret of Nathan's greatness. It shows us that the wisdom, the imperturbable serenity of his mind, have been won by the hardest of struggles, the most fearful of trials; that they rest upon the most painful of victories: the victory over self, and on resignation to the most arduous of duties: love of one's enemy.

The Christians have murdered his wife and seven hopeful sons. He, in return, has adopted a Christian child as his own. This has happened long ago. None of the persons in the drama knows of it, except the Friar; and he only knows about the adoption of the Christian child, since he at the time brought the poor little orphan to Nathan. Now the rumour spreads in Jerusalem that there is a Jew in the city bringing up a Christian girl in the Jewish faith. The church authorities become alarmed; an investigation is ordered, and the good Friar goes to warn Nathan against the rage of the Patriarch. Now at last Nathan prevails upon himself to tell his history:

To you
Alone do I relate it; yes, alone
To simple piety do I relate it:
For it alone doth understand what deeds
The man that doth resign himself to God
Can bring himself to do.—
With the child
You met me at Darûn: but know not this,
That but few days before, in Gath, the Christians
Had murdered all the Jews, with wife and child:
Know not, that in this number was my wife,
With seven hopeful sons, who one and all
Within my brother's house, where I had put them
For refuge, burned to death.—
When you arrived, three days and nights I'd lain
In dust and ashes before God, and wept.
Wept? Aye, and entered into judgment too
'Gainst God, with rage and anger: cursed myself
And the whole world; sworn against Christendom
Hate never to be reconciled.—

Yet by degrees
Reason returned. She spake in softest tones:
' And yet God is! Yet that was God's decree!
Well then,—come, practise what thou long enough
Hast comprehended: what, if thou but will'st,
Is surely not more difficult to practise
Than comprehend. Arise!' And I arose,
And cried to God: ' I will, if thou but will'st
That so I should.' Meanwhile did you alight
From horseback, giving me the child, wrapped up
Within your mantle. What you said to me,
And I to you, I have forgotten. But
This much I know: I took the child, and bore
And laid it on my bed; kissed it, and fell
Upon my knees, and sobbed, ' Ah, God, of seven
One back again already!'

Lay Brother.

Nathan! Nathan!
You are a Christian! Yes, you are, by God!
A better ne'er existed!

Nathan.

Happy we!
For what makes me to you a Christian, that
Makes you to me a Jew!

During the last year of his life, Lessing formulated his religious views systematically in the inspiring little treatise *The Education of the Human Race* (1780).[102] The fundamental thought of the theological polemics and of Nathan—the conviction that the value of a religion lies, not in its doctrines, but in its views of life; that in all positive religions there is something of the divine truth; that they are all stations, as it were, on the royal path toward the final ideal religion—finds here an expression still more precise and definite. Here the idea of organic growth, which was alluded to at the beginning of

Die Erziehnng des Menschengeschlechts.

[102] *Werke* XVIII, 185 ff.

this discussion, is set forth, disguised, it is true, in theological language, yet clearly and unequivocally.

Lessing represents the successive stages in the history of religion as a process of education. Providence is the teacher, mankind the pupil; the various systems of theology, or, as Lessing says, revelations, are the text-books.

Religious evolution.

Through education the pupil obtains nothing which he could not obtain from himself; he only obtains it more quickly and more easily. So revelation imparts nothing to mankind which mankind, if left to itself, would not discover by its own reasoning; only revelation imparts it more quickly and more easily.

In order to be effective, education must adapt itself to the mental development of the pupil. In like manner, revelation must be adapted to the various stages in the progress of mankind. Since primitive mankind is crude and sensual, primitive revelation also must be crude and sensual. The Jews, in their early period, were not capable of conceiving a strict monotheism or of entertaining a truly spiritual view of life; consequently, the divine Pedagogue revealed himself to them, not as the one God, but as the most powerful of gods, and, instead of holding out to them the prospect of an immortal life, he held before them the discipline of earthly rewards and punishments. Thus, in the Old Testament, we have the first, elementary text-book of humanity.

With the gradual progress of civilization the people became susceptible of higher views of divinity, and when Christ came they were ready to understand God as a spiritual being, and to accept the idea of immortality. This, then: a true, spiritual monotheism, and the idea of future rewards and punishments, is the essence of the second text-book of humanity, the New Testament.

Is this to be the end?—What is the object of education? To develop men. What is the object of revelation? To develop humanity. Fully developed men need text-books

no longer; and humanity, when fully developed, will need no revelations. A time must come when human reason will be able to see the divine without the help of symbols; when the good will be done, not for the sake of future rewards, but because it is the good; when God will be found, not without, but within.

None of Lessing's works is so characteristic of his religious position, and indeed of his whole intellectual attitude, as this little essay. Lessing does not break loose from the traditional belief, he accepts its premises, he adopts its phraseology. Yet, under his very hands, the old seems to assume a new and different life; its meaning changes; and having started with the conception of an extra-mundane deity, he at last finds himself face to face with a living universe. The theist before our very eyes develops into a pantheist.

De la Litterature Allemande.

Let us return to the starting-point of this chapter. In the same year in which Lessing gave to the world his intellectual testament, Frederick the Great, he too not far from the grave, suddenly appeared among the literary critics, with his startling essay *De la Littérature Allemande.*[103] This little book is perhaps the truest index of what at the beginning of this chapter was called the dualism of German life during this epoch. The names of Klopstock, Wieland, Lessing, do not appear in it; Gellert is spoken of as the foremost representative of German literature; the bulk of the paper

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[103] *DLD. nr.* 16. Cf. B. Suphan, *Friedr. des Grossen Schrift über d. d. Litt.* H. Proehle, *Fr. d. Gr. u. d. d. Lit. p.* 165 ff. G. Krause, *Fr. d. Gr. u. d. d. Poesie p.* 29 ff.—Frederick's conception of his own services to German culture may be gathered from what he said to Mirabeau in answer to the question why, being the German Caesar, he had not also endeavoured to become the Augustus of German literature: "You do not know what you are saying. By allowing the intellectual life of Germany to take its own course, I have done more for the Germans than I could possibly have done by giving them a literature." Krause *p.* 35.

consists in pedantic considerations about the defects of the German language, and in amateurish propositions for its "improvement." The wonderful revival of the German mind, the struggle of a whole generation for spiritual freedom and humane culture, seems to have been going on without disturbing the sphere of the lonely autocrat on the throne of Prussia. And yet he himself, as we know, was a part of this movement. Without his heroic career, without his enlightened views, this movement, although bound to come, would probably have been delayed and would certainly have been different. And if he failed to grasp the new life which was pressing upon him on all sides, he seems at least to have had an instinctive feeling of its presence: he concludes his essay by prophesying a golden age of German literature near at hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AGE OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE CLIMAX OF INDIVIDUALISM.

(The End of the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.)

I. The Storm-and-Stress Movement.

The golden age of modern German literature and the French Revolution are not only contemporary with each other, they are different phases of the same great emancipation movement, the gradual rise of which throughout the eighteenth century we have been studying in the two preceding chapters.

Extreme individualism of the Storm-and-Stress movement.

In the seventh and eighth decades of the century, when the 'Sturm und Drang' agitation was at its highest, it looked as though Germany instead of France was to be the scene of a violent social upheaval. Never, with the one exception of the Romantic movement, which as a matter of fact was nothing but a revived 'Sturm und Drang,' has individualism been preached with greater vehemence and aggressiveness than it was preached by the leaders of this agitation.

Destruction of every barrier to individual growth; war against authority of whatever kind; the glorification of primitive, uncorrupted nature, of instinct, of passion, of genius; the vilification of the existing social order, of regularity, of learning, of conscious effort—these were the watchwords which inspired the generation succeeding that of Klopstock and Lessing.

It was the time when Hamann (1730–88), 'the Magus

of the North,' wrote in sibylline utterances of the lofty freedom of Oriental literature, contrasting with it the shallowness and meagreness of modern life.[1] "Nature works through senses and passions. He who mutilates these organs, how can he feel? Are paralyzed sinews capable of motion? You wish to rule Nature, and you fetter your own hands and feet? If passions are organs of dishonour, do they therefore cease to be weapons of manhood? Passion alone gives to abstraction hands, feet, wings; passion alone gives to images and symbols, spirit, life, language. A heart without passions is a head without ideas." It was the time when the youthful Herder, Hamann's pupil, revelled in panegyrics on untutored popular life and unstudied popular song. It was the time when Basedow (1723–90) filled the air with his boisterous call for a new education based on individuality and the contact with real life[2]; when Lavater (1741–1801) by his bold generalizations about a mysterious correspondence between spiritual force and physical form seemed to give a new and higher aspect to individual existence.[3] It was the time when the German drama, novel, and lyrics, seemed to have become a vast battlefield, on which there were arrayed against each other social prejudice, class tyranny, moral corruption, on the one hand; and free humanity, self-asserting individuals, the apostles of a new morality, on the other.

Where did this agitation originate? What was its rela-

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[1] Cf. Hettner *l. c.* III, 1, *p.* 308 ff. J. Minor, *Hamann in s. Bedeutung f. d. Sturm- u. Drangperiode.* The quotation is from *Kreuzzüge des Philologen* (1762); *Schriften* ed. Roth II, 280. 286 ff.

[2] His *Methodenbuch für Väter und Mütter* appeared in 1770; the *Elementarwerk* 1774. In the same year Basedow established the Dessau 'Philanthropinum.'

[3] His *Physiognomische Fragmente* were published between 1775 and 1778. Cf. Goethe's masterly characterization of Lavater and Basedow, *Dichtg u. Wahrh. book* 14; *Werke* XXII, 150 ff. A. Sauer, *Stürmer und Dränger; DNL.* LXXIX, 14 ff.

tion to the three great leaders of the older generation, Klopstock, Wieland, Lessing?

Although the movement would have been impossible had it not been preceded by Lessing's intrepid, though conservative, work of reform, its conservatism prevented him from having a large personal influence upon the younger and more radical minds of the age. Wieland appeared to the 'Sturm und Drang' men only from his frivolous side; he was considered by most of them[4] as the very incarnation of artificiality and corruption; he and Voltaire were held up to scorn and contempt as the two great enemies and destroyers of morality. Klopstock, on the other hand, was the patron saint of the movement; not only at Göttingen, where Voss, Boie, Hölty, Miller,[4a] the brothers Stolberg, and the rest of the so-called 'Hainbündler' went into hysterics over his name, but all over Germany he was at that time worshipped as the greatest man of the nation. Yet even the effect of Klopstock's influence would have been less, but for the quiver of feverish emotion into which the intellectual world of Germany was thrown by the man who more powerfully and eloquently than any other had expressed that longing for nature, for freedom, for individuality, for humanity, which we have seen cropping out again and again in German literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Jean Jacques Rousseau.

It is indeed impossible to conceive of the 'Sturm und Drang' movement without Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloise* and *Émile*. It is undeniable that it was the stimulus received from France which set this agitation in motion. But it must at once be added that, at first at least, the agitation assumed in Germany proportions far more imposing than in France.

Leaving aside for the present the youthful works of

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[4] A notable exception to this is the unquestionable influence exerted by Wieland upon Heinse. Cf. Hettner *l. c.* 288.

[4a] For Miller's *Siegwart* (1776), perhaps the most sentimental production of this group, cf. Er. Schmidt, *Charakteristiken p.* 178 ff.

Goethe and Schiller, which, it is hardly necessary to say, were among the most remarkable productions of this period, what is there in the French drama or lyrics of the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century which in bitterness of invective against the nobility, against militarism, against princely despotism could at all be compared with the works even of such men as Maximilian Klinger, Reinhold Lenz, Heinrich Leopold Wagner, Christian Daniel Schubart?

Literary representations of political and social misery.

Take such a play as *Der Hofmeister* by Lenz (1774). The principal figure is a weakly, sentimental enthusiast whom the ambition and poverty of his father force to accept a position as resident tutor in a noble family, where of course he falls desperately in love with the daughter of the house. He ruins the girl and is made to ruin himself. But is this to be wondered at? Is it strange that he loses every spark of self-respect and human dignity? Has he not been treated worse than a slave? Is it not society rather than he himself that has made him a wretch? The mistress of the house and a caller converse with each other about the new ballet-dancer; the tutor, to whom his Leipzig student days have given a taste for the theatre, takes the liberty of throwing in a remark, when the lady interrupts him[5]: "You should know, my friend, that domestics do not speak in the presence of persons of rank. Go to your room. Who has asked you?" —And the master of the house, finding him and his pupil at their studies, indulges in the following apostrophe[6]: "That's right. That's what I want. And if the rascal doesn't know his lesson, preceptor, beat him over the head with the book, till he can't stand! I'll fix you, you good-for-nothing! You shall learn something, or I'll whip you until your bowels burst! And you, sir, no letting up, if you please, and no loafing and lounging! Work won't

Lenz's Hofmeister.

[5] *Der Hofmeister* I, 3; *DNL.* LXXX, 7. [6] *Ib.* I, 4.

make you sick. That's only an idea of you schoolmasters. —Keep your seat, sir; keep your seat, I say. What is the chair there for, but to sit upon? You have travelled in the world, you say, and don't know that yet?"

Wagner's Kindermörderin.

Or take the *Kindermörderin* by Wagner (1776). What a picture of depravity and destruction brought into the family of an honest citizen through the brutal licentiousness of an all-powerful soldiery! An officer is quartered in the house of a butcher. In the absence of the husband, he inveigles mother and daughter to go with him to a public masquerade. After the ball he takes them to a house of ill repute. The mother is drugged into sleep, while the daughter falls a victim to the officer's licentiousness. This is the revolting sequence of events in the first act. The rest may be imagined. The lawless libertine poses as a devoted lover, he holds out a promise of marriage. For months the girl lives in hope and despair, pursued by shame and repentance, and in continual dread of her stern, austere father. At last, like Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust*, she takes flight. The mother dies from grief. The daughter, frenzied by misery and starvation, kills her infant child, and is put to death by the sword.[7]

Klinger's Faust.

Or, read a description of the misery and oppression of the peasantry such as is given in the following episode of *Faust's Leben, Thaten und Höllenfahrt*, by Maximilian Klinger.[8] The devil and Faust are riding one day on the banks of the river Fulda, when under

[7] *DLD. nr.* 13 (*DNL.* LXXX, 283 ff.). A similar subject is treated in *Die Soldaten* by Lenz (1776; *DNL.* LXXX, 83 ff.). Cf., also, Bürger's ballad *Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain* (1781; *DNL.* LXXVIII, 241) and Schiller's *Die Kindsmörderin* (1782; *Sämmtl. Schr.* I, 226). Erich Schmidt, *H. L. Wagner*^{2} *p.* 70 ff. 137 ff.

[8] *DNL.* LXXIX, 201 ff. Although this work was published only in 1791, its conception undoubtedly goes back to the seventies, and the episode quoted is thoroughly characteristic of Storm and Stress. Cf. Ch. G. Salzmann's *Carl v. Carlsberg oder über das menschliche Elend* (1783–88).

an oak tree near a village they see a peasant-woman sitting with her children, lifeless pictures of pain and dull despair. Faust rides up to them and inquires the cause of their misery. The woman looks at him blankly for a long time. At last, with sobs and tears, she tells something like the following:

"'For the past three years my husband has not been able to pay the taxes to the lord bishop. The first year the crops failed; the second, the wild boars of the bishop ruined everything; and the third year, the bishop's hunt went over our fields. Since the bailiff was continually threatening my husband with eviction, he was going to-day to drive a fattened calf and his last pair of oxen to Frankfurt, to sell them in order to pay his taxes. As he was driving out of the yard, the steward of the bishop came and demanded the calf for the bishop's table. My husband represented to him his distress, and implored him to consider what a cruelty it would be to force this calf from him for nothing, which in Frankfurt he could sell for a good price. The steward asked whether he did not know that a peasant was not allowed to transport anything beyond the frontier which belonged to him, the steward. While they were talking, the bailiff with his constables appeared. Instead of taking my husband's part, he had the oxen unhitched; the steward took the calf; the constables drove me and the children from hearth and home; and my despairing husband cut his throat in the barn. There! see him under this sheet! We sit here to guard his body from the wild beasts; for the priest is not willing to bury him.' She tore the white sheet from the corpse, and sank to the ground. Faust started back at the terrible sight. He cried, 'Mankind! mankind! is this thy lot? Did God allow this unfortunate man to be born, that a servant of his religion should drive him into suicide?'"

Faust rides to the bishop's palace. The bishop, a 'fat, red, jovial prelate,' invites him to the table. During the dinner Faust, still quivering with excitement, relates what he has seen and heard in the morning. Nobody seems to pay attention to it. Faust grows all the more earnest and aggressive. The bishop, to divert the conversation, says to the steward: 'Steward, that's a nice calf's head there in the centre of the table.' Steward: 'Why, that's the head of

Hans Ruprecht's calf.' Bishop: 'Well, well! All the better! Let me carve it.' The steward places the platter before the bishop. Faust whispers something into the devil's ear, and at the moment when the bishop puts his knife on the calf's head, it is changed into the head of Ruprecht staring wild and bloody into the bishop's eyes. The bishop drops the knife, and falls into a fainting fit, and the whole company sit paralyzed and terror-stricken.[9]

Or, finally, listen to the fierce denunciation of princely voluptuousness and avarice in Schubart's *Fürstengruft* (1781).[10] There they lie, the remnants of a proud past, once the idols of a world, now the prey of worms and decay! The hand which once threw a freeman into chains, because he spoke the truth, has now shrivelled to a bone. Dried up are the channels in which once wanton blood was boiling, poisoning virtue of soul and body. They who petted dogs and horses and foreign wenches, and allowed genius and wisdom to starve, they are themselves now left alone and friendless.

Schubart's Fürstengruft.

Weckt sie nur nicht mit eurem bangen Ächzen,
Ihr Scharen, die sie arm gemacht,
Verscheucht die Raben, dass von ihrem Krächzen
Kein Wütrich hier erwacht!

Hier klatsche nicht des armen Landmanns Peitsche,
Die nachts das Wild vom Acker scheucht!
An diesem Gitter weile nicht der Deutsche,
Der siech vorüberkeucht!

Hier heule nicht der bleiche Waisenknabe,
Dem ein Tyrann den Vater nahm;
Nie fluche hier der Krüppel an dem Stabe,
Von fremdem Solde lahm!

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[9] Cf. Bürger's *Der wilde Jäger* (*DNL.* LXXVIII, 231) and Voss's *Die Leibeigenen* (*Gedichte* 1785, *p.* 11).

[10] *DNL.* LXXXI, 375 ff.

Damit die Quäler nicht zu früh erwachen,
Seid menschlicher, erweckt sie nicht.
Ha! früh genug wird über ihnen krachen
Der Donner am Gericht!

Evidently there was plenty of inflammable material in the time to serve as fuel for a revolution. And there was plenty of revolutionary spirit also to kindle the latent fire into open conflagation.

Revolutionary spirit.

Nur Freiheitsschwert ist Schwert für das Vaterland!
Wer Freiheitsschwert hebt, flammt durch das Schlachtgewühl
Wie Blitz des Nachtsturms! Stürzt Paläste!
Stürze Tyrann, dem Verderber Gottes!

O Namen, Namen festlich wie Siegsgesang!
Tell! Hermann! Klopstock! Brutus! Timoleon!
O ihr, wem freie Seele Gott gab,
Flammend ins eherne Herz gegraben!

It would be in vain to look in such effusions as these—they are from Fritz von Stolberg's famous *Ode to Liberty* (1775)[11]—it would be in vain to look here for any distinct political programme or for a serious plan of action of any kind. These young champions of freedom were so absorbed in their own feelings that they had no time or strength left for practical exertion. Yet, that the very expression of sentiments like these pointed toward a coming revolution, there can be no doubt. And what else but revolutionary was that craving for Klopstockian originality, for the Nature of Rousseau, for the weirdness and wildness of Ossian, which again and again breaks out in the writings of these years? What else but revolutionary were the favourite heroes of this generation: Faust, the rebel against tradition and accepted wisdom; Prometheus, the titanic despiser of the Olympians, the champion of untrammelled

[11] *Die Freiheit* (1775); *Ges. Werke* I, 19. Cf. Goethe's characterization of the brothers Stolberg, *Dichtg u. Wahrh. b.* 18; *Werke* XXIII, 53 ff.

humanity; and so many similar names of legend, history, or fiction?

In Klinger's drama *Sturm und Drang* (1776), the influence of which is demonstrated by the fact that it has given the name to the whole movement, the principal hero, from mere excess of vitality and an indefinite craving for boundless activity, runs away to take part in the American Revolution.

Klinger's Sturm und Drang.

"I had to run away," he says,[12] "to get out of this fearful restlessness and uncertainty. Have been everything. Became a day-labourer to be something. Lived on the Alps, pastured goats, lay day and night under the boundless vault of the heavens, cooled by the winds, burning with an inner fire. Nowhere rest, nowhere repose. See, thus I am glutted by impulse and power, and cannot work it out of me. I am going to take part in this campaign as a volunteer; there I can expand my soul, and if they do me the favour to shoot me down,—all the better."

In *Die Zwillinge* (1776), perhaps the most powerful of all of Klinger's productions, Guelfo, the fratricide, gives vent to his untamable passion in the following manner[13]:

Die Zwillinge.

"Has not everything a sting for revenge? Does not the worm under thy foot coil up and try to avenge itself? I have hated him from the cradle, hated him from the hour when his vanity wanted to overreach me, hated him from his first childish babble. Ha! Did he not once in sport call me 'little Guelfo'? Did I not strike him down for it? The clothes he wore I hated. Did he wear a coat of the colour of mine, I would tear mine to pieces. When all the boys had imitated my firm step, he also wanted to copy it. But I worked at my knees and worked until my step had changed.—It seems to me sometimes I hate Camilla, because I saw her lips on his. And when I think what life is, how one, who

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[12] *Sturm u. Drang* I, 1; *DNL.* LXXIX, 68. Cf. Wagner's *Kinderm.* IV, 1: "Noch heut' macht' ich mich auf den Weg nach Amerika, und hälf' für die Freiheit streiten."

[13] *Die Zwillinge* III, 1; *l. c.* 40. 37. For the relation of Klinger's drama to Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent* cf. Hettner *l. c.* III. 1, *p.* 351 f.

has a powerful soul, lies on the ground, and another, a feeble, vain, coaxing sycophant, steps over him and takes a high place! I am only Guelfo, a man by his deeds terrible alike to friend and foe. And there, Ferdinando, a weak, miserable, toy manikin, with a bit of a girl's heart, talking incessantly about sentiment.—I must, I must! Fate has spoken, I must! The angel of Death flourishes his bloody sword over me and touches my soul! I must, I must!"

Maler Müller's Faust.

Maler Müller, another of these young fire-eaters, prefaces his drama *Faust's Leben* (1778) with the following reflection [14]:

"Faust was one of the favourite heroes of my childhood, because I early recognised him as a great fellow, a fellow who feels all his power, feels the bridle which Fate has put upon him, and tries to throw it off, who has the courage to hurl everything down that steps in his way to check him.—Is it not in human nature to lift one's self as high as possible, to be fully what one feels he might be? The grumbling, too, against Fate and the world, which hold us down, which force our noble self, our independent will into the yoke of conventions, is in human nature. Where is the lowly, long-suffering creature which never would wish to soar upward, which would resign itself of its own accord, which would delight in its own degradation? I have no feeling for such a creature; I should consider it a monstrosity which had issued prematurely from the womb of nature and in which nature has no part.—There are moments in life—who does not know them?—when the heart overleaps itself, when the best, the noblest fellow, in spite of justice and law, cannot help being carried beyond himself."

Bürger.

Bürger's whole life and work was a continual rebellion against accepted respectability and order. In his ballads—*Lenore* (1773), *Der Wilde Jäger* (1778), *Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain* (1781),[15] and others—he displays a marvellous power of naturalistic effects. Irresistibly he forces the hearer into the wild dance

[14] Preface to *Faust's Leben; DLD. nr. 3, p.* 8.

[15] *DNL.* LXXVIII, 170. 231. 241. Cf. Er. Schmidt, *Charakt.* 199 ff.

of his feverish imagination. He revels in the gruesome and the sensational. He makes the ghastly as ghastly as possible, he makes the atrocities, especially those committed by noblemen against the common people, as atrocious as possible. In his lyric poems he reveals his stormy, unruly heart without reserve or restriction. He is pursued by a passionate love for his wife's sister. Far from suppressing his desire, he speaks of it as a necessity, as a natural right [16]; he glories in it, he surrounds it with all the halo of paradisiac innocence and beauty.[17] And when at last his poor, devoted wife dies, and he is allowed to make Molly also legally his own, the frenzied man breaks out into a triumphal song of praise and joy.[18]

Heinse's Ardinghello.

Wilhelm Heinse, in his *Ardinghello* (1787), goes so far as to preach unbridled license as the highest law of nature. With him there is no attempt at palliating or apologizing for things. Life is the self-manifestation of an elemental instinct. Passion, lust, crime, are necessary forms of existence. Or rather, there is no crime in the ordinary sense. The only real crime is weakness; the true virtue is power; the highest good is beauty, the manifestation of power. Thus Ardinghello rages through his life from seduction to murder, from murder to seduction, ever remorseless, ever master of himself, ever teeming with vitality, ever revelling in voluptuous delights, a Napoleon of sensuality. He himself says of Hannibal [19]:

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[16] Cf. the poem *An die Menschengesichter; ib.* 94:

> Ich habe was Liebes, das hab ich zu lieb;
> Was kann ich, was kann ich dafür?

and the sonnet *Naturrecht; ib.* 120.

[17] Cf. the poem *Untreue über Alles; ib.* 238.

[18] *Das hohe Lied von der Einzigen; ib.* 122. It is not surprising that Schiller should have had a natural aversion to Bürger. Cf. his essay *Ueber Bürgers Gedichte* (1791); *Sämmtl. Schr.* VI, 314 ff.

[19] *Ardinghello b.* V; *DNL.* CLXXXVI, 131.

"Among all heroic expeditions none has impressed me so much as that of Hannibal through Italy. From his plunge over the wild, swift streaming Rhone below Avignon, and the bold march through the rapid torrents, the dark gorges, over the primeval snow and ice of Alpine rocks,—in every one of his battles he appears as an Olympian athlete. Everywhere with his well-trained little troop he falls upon his big clumsy antagonist, strikes him down, and beats his nose, ears, and jaws into one bleeding mass. He understood the art of victory, as no one else. Before, in the midst of, and after the battle he handled armies of hundreds of thousands like a single man; at every spot, at every moment, full of caution, alertness, courage, shrewdness, and presence of mind. What a succession of exploits! Like an untamable lion bent on revenge, he tears through the land, destroying and devouring the herds of cattle and the bleeding sheep. What are millions of men, who all their lives have had not a single hour like this, compared with this one man?"

At last Ardinghello founds a communistic state, the most characteristic features of which are free love, woman suffrage, and the worship of the elements. In a parable which may be taken as a motto of the whole novel, Heinse expresses his view of life thus[20]:

"A waxen house-god, left out of sight, stood by the side of a fire in which beautiful Campanian vases were being hardened, and began to melt. He bitterly complained to the flames. 'Look,' he said, 'how cruelly you treat me. To those vessels yonder you lend durability, and me you destroy.' The fire answered: 'Complain rather of your own nature. As to myself, I am fire everywhere.'"

Causes which prevented a German revolution in the eighteenth century.

In a word, then, all German literature of those years seems to be aflame. A new order of things seems about to break forth from the brain of the nation. A political and social revolution seems imminent. Why did this revolution not come?

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[20] *DNL.* CLXXXVI, 52.

A number of causes co-operated to prevent it. In the first place, the revolution was, to a certain extent at least, forestalled by reform measures, emanating from the rulers themselves. Frederick the Great was by no means the only German Prince of the eighteenth century who understood the signs of the time. However high he stands above the emperor Joseph II. (1765–90) in political discernment and in statesmanlike appreciation of the difference between the desirable and the attainable,—the youthful enthusiasm, the reformatory zeal of the latter were none the less worthy of the admiration bestowed upon them by the best men of his time; and if he had accomplished nothing but the abolition of serfdom, this alone would be sufficient to secure him a place among the benefactors of humanity. Nor were these two great princes alone in their lofty view of the tasks and duties of rulers. Karl August of Sachsen-Weimar, Karl Friedrich of Baden, Max Joseph of Baiern, Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand of Braunschweig among the secular; Friedrich Franz von Fürstenberg of Münster, Emmerich Joseph of Mainz, Franz Ludwig von Erthal of Würzburg-Bamberg among the ecclesiastical princes, were shining examples of enlightened statesmanship. They were men who considered themselves servants of the state, if not of the people; and by alleviating feudal burdens, by softening class distinctions and enmities, by improving the judiciary, by fostering institutions of learning, by patronizing men of genius and culture,[21] they did much toward reconciling even the boisterous spirits of the 'Sturm und Drang' period to existing

Reforms emanating from the princes.

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[21] Cf. L. Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs d. Grossen bis zur Gründung d. deutschen Bundes* I, 94 ff. 106 ff.—A typical representative of this spirit of an enlightened and sober liberalism is Georg Forster (1754–1794), author of the *Ansichten vom Niederrhein* (1791). Selected essays of Forster's *DLD. nr.* 46–47. About the tragic fate which finally drove this man into the arms of the Jacobins cf. Biedermann *l. c.* II, 3, *p.* 1197 ff.

conditions. The days of an Augustus the Strong belonged irrevocably to the past[22]; the German people as a rule were right when they looked to their princes for reform and progress.

Wholesome results of the political decentralization.

Secondly. The dismemberment of the German empire into an infinitude of little independent sovereignties, hurtful as it was politically, was at the same time not without its compensating social advantages. The proverb "Under the crozier there is good living" (Unter dem Krummstab ist gut wohnen) was true of not a few among the ecclesiastical estates, and the same might be said of a good many of the secular principalities, the free cities, and the rural communities. No one reading in Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* the description of Frankfurt as it was in his childhood, can help being impressed with the soundness and good sense, the thoughtfulness and culture, the integrity and liberal-mindedness of the average Frankfurt citizen of that time. Nor was Goethe's native town altogether an exception in this respect. What a happy, patriarchal life did the old Gleim lead in his hospitable retreat at Halberstadt[23]; what an honoured position did Klopstock occupy in Hamburg society; what a homely charm there is spread over Kant's life at Königsberg! And when have domestic joys, rural simplicity, the holiday pleasures and workaday affairs of a contented, comfortable, and respectable people been more pleasantly and truthfully portrayed than in the sketches of Westphalian yeomanry homes drawn by Justus Moeser, or the scenes from Hannoverian and Holstein country life by Matthias Claudius and Johann Heinrich Voss, of Swabian peasantry life by Peter Hebel? Such poems as Voss's *Luise* or *The*

[22] Even a tyrant like Karl Eugen of Würtemberg, notorious for his shameful treatment of Schubart, felt the need of at least posing as a benevolent patriarch. Cf. J. Minor, *Schiller* I, 85 ff.

[23] Cf. Goethe's characterization of Gleim, *Dichtg u. Wahrh. b.* 10; *Werke* XXI, 171 f.

Seventieth Birthday; as Claudius's *Rheinweinlied* or *Abendlied;* as Hebel's *Die Wiese* or *Sonntagsfrühe,*[24] are classic examples of the unspeakable charm which the faithful representation of an existence hedged in by uncorrupted sentiment, simple decorum, and a chaste popular tradition cannot fail to exert. A single one of Moeser's *Patriotische Phantasieen* will be sufficient to mark the contrast between these descriptions of the average life of the common herd and the glaring pictures of aristocratic depravity as painted by Klinger or Lenz. It is a humorous sketch purporting to be a letter of a travelling Gascon to a Westphalian schoolmaster, and runs in the main as follows[25]:

"You may say as much as you please in praise of your fatherland, I cannot help telling you that, although I have travelled a good deal on land and sea, I have never seen a country where there are fewer thoroughly original fools than in yours. I am, as you know, a playwright by profession, and I visited your country to find some material for comedies, as others go abroad in quest of lions, monkeys, and other rare animals. But to tell the truth, I have not found a single fool among your people who was worth studying; which undoubtedly shows that there is no genius among you.

"I will not dispute you the title of good, honest, industrious people. But these are to be found everywhere, and when you have seen one, you have seen all. What I am after is the exceptional. That is the thing which pays nowadays.

"At first I thought this deplorable uniformity of your countrymen might be confined to the common people. I hoped after all among the nobility, or at least among the ladies, to find something which I could use for my collection of rarities. But

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[24] Hebel, whose *Allemannische Gedichte* appeared in 1803, cannot of course in any sense be called a contemporary of the Storm-and-Stress writers. However, since his poetry is closely related to that of Voss and was directly influenced by it, his name does not seem out of place here.

[25] *Patriot. Phant.* ed. R. Zöllner *p.* 82 ff. Cf., also, *Die gute selige Frau, ib.* 16 ff. *Der alte Rath, ib.* 68 f. *Schreiben des Herrn von H.,* edition of 1778, I, 266 ff.

here also I was disappointed. I met a nobleman of high rank, who treated his bondmen as rational beings; who felt their wants, advised them, helped them in case of need, and took a paternal interest in all their household affairs. The lady of the house left me in the midst of an interesting tale of mine, in order to talk with a poor woman. And—what I thought almost original —mademoiselle started for the cellar to give out the wine, while I was making a sketch of the latest thing in fashions for her. When, after dinner, we went into the garden, I noticed that there was not even an orangery. Would you believe it, no orangery! The master of the house told me that in the times of his grandfather no nobleman's estate had been without one; but that now they thought more of an oak tree than of a laurel. Oh, what commonplace people!

"Well, I thought, in the country things are hopeless; but perhaps in the cities there is more to be had. But no, here too, with the exception of a few abortive copies, the originals of which I had seen infinitely superior elsewhere, nothing but healthy, contented, industrious people; not a single figure worthy to be sketched or to be exhibited in a salon. A lady to whom I expressed my astonishment about this promised to show me something which I would hardly see in other countries. And where did she take me? To the nursery, where her husband was endeavouring to teach their children the fundamentals of Christianity; a task in which, after the first few civilities, he quietly proceeded during my presence! The lady sat down by the side of her daughter, and pressed her hand when she answered her father correctly, and the girl was more charmed with this approbation than with me, although I flatter myself not to be an altogether ordinary person. I suppose these people even go to church with the common rabble, and have never dreamed of the fact that the ten commandments have been out of fashion for more than a hundred years.

"In a country like this, in a country where, I suppose, husband and wife still sleep in one bed, it is no wonder that from mere *ennui* a great many children are begotten; I am only surprised that there are not a million to the square mile. But the only things of interest which I have found there, and of which I shall take specimens with me to put them on exhibition in Paris, are raw ham and Pumpernickel."

Of the circumstances which prevented the 'Sturm und

Drang' movement from plunging Germany into a political revolution, we have thus far mentioned two. (1) The social-reform policy entered upon by the most enlightened of the German governments—tending, as it did, toward the limitation of feudal privileges, the softening down of class distinctions, the public recognition of the rights of man—was, in part at least, a fulfilment of the very demands raised by the leaders of the movement. (2) The political decentralization of Germany—preventing, as it did, on the one hand, the growth of a strong public opinion, and ensuring, on the other, a considerable amount of local independence, private comfort and happiness—served to make the middle classes (the well-to-do peasant, the burgher, the scholar, the professional man, the official) slow even to desire a radical change of existing conditions.

The essentially intellectual character of the Storm-and-Stress movement.

This leads us to a third and final consideration. The 'Sturm und Drang' agitation, although teeming with social catchwords and political phrases, was at bottom an essentially intellectual movement. Its true aim—and here we see its close connection with the whole development of German civilization since the Thirty Years' War—was not so much a reconstruction of outward conditions, a reorganization of public life, as it was the expression of the inner self, the deepening of individual experience, the rounding out of individual character. The ideal of human perfection which inspired this movement was not man as a social being, dependent upon and determined by the force of surrounding conditions, but man as such, man lifted above the barriers of his political, social, moral environment, man in the full autonomy of his own free, spiritual nature. And it is fair to assume that it was this lofty individualistic view of life more than anything else which deprived the 'Sturm und Drang' movement of a large popular following; which restricted its revolutionary influence largely to the sphere of thought and æsthetic culture.

The German revolution of the eighteenth century an intellectual revolution.

Thus it came to pass that the great German revolution of the eighteenth century was fought out, not on the political battlefield, but in the realm of letters; that its leaders were, not a Mirabeau, a Danton, a Napoleon, but men like Herder, Kant, Goethe, Schiller; that its victories were won, not in parliamentary debates or in street conflicts, but on the stage and in the study; that it resulted, not in a violent uprooting of the old, hereditary aristocracy, but in the peaceful triumph of the new, intellectual aristocracy, which during the hundred years just preceding, recruiting itself largely from the middle classes, had gradually united in itself the best minds of the whole nation.

II. The Classics of Individualism.

Having now reached the classic period of modern German literature, we shall not enter into a study of the lives of the great men who represent it, nor shall we undertake a detailed analysis of their works. What we shall attempt is to understand their place in the history of German civilization; to grasp their relation to the time in which they lived; to interpret their message to coming generations.

To put it briefly, the German classic thinkers and poets, while leading the intellectual movement of the eighteenth century to its culmination, while saying the last word and embodying the highest ideal of individualism, ushered in at the same time the strongest intellectual movement of the nineteenth century, by anticipating, at least in theory, the new collectivistic ideal.

Let us elucidate this statement by a rapid review of what the work of Herder and Kant, of Goethe and Schiller means to us.

1. Herder.

None of these men was more distinctly the spokesman of his own age and the prophet of a coming era than Johann

Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). Like the rest of the 'Sturm und Drang' enthusiasts, he began as a follower of Rousseau, as a sworn defender of individuality, of nature, of freedom. And throughout his life he remained faithful to these ideals of his youth. But from the very beginning there was an essential difference between him and Rousseau. To Rousseau, mankind appeared dissected, as it were, into an infinitude of free and equal individuals; the development, the culture, the happiness of these individuals was the all-absorbing topic of his interest and passionate endeavour. Herder, although equally enthusiastic in exalting the dignity and moral autonomy of the individual human soul, conceived of it from the very first as an integral part of a larger organism: the soul of the people. Like Winckelmann and Lessing, only much more comprehensively than the former and much more emphatically than the latter, Herder based his view of the development of mankind upon the fundamental idea of national individualities. And in the perfection of the national type he saw the way toward the perfection both of the individual man and of humanity at large.

Herder the spokesman of individualism, the prophet of collectivism.

It is this intuitive grasp of the organic unity of all mankind, of the inevitable interdependence of the individual, the nation, and the race, which has made Herder the father of the modern evolutionary view of history.

All the great achievements of human civilization—language, religion, law, custom, poetry, art—he considered as the natural products of collective human life, as the necessary outgrowth of national instincts and conditions. Man does not invent these things, he does not consciously set out to coin words, to establish a certain set of religious conceptions, or to work out certain problems of artistic composition. At least this is not the way in which the vital forms of a language, the great religious symbols, or the ideal types of art and poetry

The idea of organic growth.

are created. They are not created at all; they are not the work of individual endeavour; they are the result of accumulated impressions exercised upon masses of human beings living under similar conditions and similarly organized. In other words, they are engendered and conceived in the nation as a whole; the individual poets, artists, prophets, through whom they are given their audible or visible shape, are only, as it were, the most receptive and at the same time the most productive organs of the national body. They are the channels through which a national language, a national poetry, a national religion come to light.

Twenty years before Herder's first writings, Montesquieu in his *Esprit des Lois* (1748) had made the analysis of political institutions a means of gauging national character. Herder applied this same method to the study of language, religion, and, above all, of literature. "He taught us," as Goethe says,[26] "to conceive of poetry as the common gift of all mankind, not as the private property of a few refined, cultivated individuals." He taught us to see, in a rude Esquimaux funeral song no less than in a Hebrew psalm or in a Spanish ballad dealing with romantic love adventure, national spirit crystallized in verse. He for the first time clearly and systematically considered all literature as the expression of living national forces, as the reflex of the whole of the national civilization.

Literature the expression of national character.

Herder was not more than twenty-three years old when, in the *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (1767), he first gave utterance to this epoch-making idea. "There is the same law of change"—thus he begins the second Fragment[27]—"in all mankind and in every individual nation and tribe. From

Laws of literary development.

[26] *Dichtg u. Wahrh. b.* 10; *Werke* XXI, 179.

[27] *Von den Lebensaltern einer Sprache; Sämmtl. Werke* ed. B. Suphan I, 151 ff. Cf. R. Haym, *Herder* I, 137 ff. Hillebrand, *German Thought p.* 117 ff.—The latest biographer of Herder is E. Kühnemann.

the bad to the good, from the good to the better and best, from the best to the less good, from the less good to the bad—this is the circle of all things. So it is with art and science; they grow, blossom, ripen, and decay. So it is with language also." A primitive people, like a child, stares at all things; fright, fear, admiration are the only emotions of which it is capable, and the language of these emotions consists of high-pitched, inarticulate sounds and violent gestures. This is the first, prehistoric, infantile period in the history of a language. There follows the period of youth. With the increasing knowledge of things, fright and wonder are softened. Man comes to be more familiar with his surroundings, his life becomes more civilized. But as yet he is in close contact with nature; affections, emotions, sensuous impressions have more influence upon his conduct than principles and thought. This is the age of poetry. The language now is a melodious echo of the outer world; it is full of images and metaphors, it is free and natural in its construction. The whole life of the people is poetry. "Battles and victories, fables and moral reflections, laws and mythology are now contained in song." The third period is the age of manhood. The social fabric grows more complicated, the laws of conduct become more artificial, the intellect obtains the ascendency over the emotions. Literature also takes part in this change. The language becomes more abstract; it strives for regularity, for order; it gains in intellectual strength and loses in sensuous fervour; in other words, poetry is replaced by prose. And prose, in its turn, after it has fulfilled the measure of its maturity, sinks into senile correctness and sterility, thus rounding out the life of a given national literature, and making room for a new development.

Primitive civilization.

Here we have the key to Herder's whole life-work. Again and again, in one way or another, he comes back to this conception of literature as a manifestation of national culture. During his voyage, in

1769, from Riga to Nantes, he comes to understand the Homeric epics as the poetic outgrowth of a seafaring people.

"It was seafarers," he writes in his diary,[28] "who brought the Greeks their earliest religion. All Greece was a colony on the sea. Consequently their mythology was not, like that of the Egyptians and Arabs, a religion of the desert, but a religion of the sea and the forest. Orpheus, Homer, Pindar, to be fully understood, ought to be read at sea. With what an absorption one listens to or tells stories on shipboard! How easily a sailor inclines to the fabulous! Himself an adventurer, in quest of strange worlds, how ready is he to imagine wondrous things! Have I not experienced this myself? With what a sense of wonder I went on board ship! Did I not see everything stranger, larger, more astounding and fearful than it was? With what curiosity and excitement one approaches the land! How one stares at the pilot with his wooden shoes and his large white hat! How one sees in him the whole French nation down to their king, Louis the Great! Is it strange that out of such a state of strained expectation and wonder tales like that of the Argonauts and poems like the Odyssey should have sprung?"

In common with the young Goethe and Justus Moeser, Herder in 1773 published the 'Fliegende Blätter' *Von deutscher Art und Kunst.* Here he applies the same principle to the study of old Scotch and English poetry, and of popular song in general. He tells[29] how on his cruise in the Baltic and North Seas he for the first time fully appreciated Ossian: "Suddenly borne away from the petty stir and strife of civilized life, from the study-chair of the scholar and the soft cushions of the salons; far removed from social distractions, from libraries, from newspapers; floating on the wide open ocean; suspended between the sky and the bottomless deep; daily surrounded by the same infinite elements, only now and then a new distant coast, a strange cloud, a far-off dreamland appearing before our

Popular song.

[28] *Werke* IV, 357 ff.

[29] *Briefwechsel über Ossian u. d. Lieder alter Völker; Werke* V, 168 f.

vision; passing by the cliffs and islands and sand-banks where formerly skalds and Vikings wielded their harps or swords, where Fingal's deeds were done, where Ossian's melancholy strains resounded—believe me, there I could read the ancient skalds and bards to better purpose than in the professor's lecture-room." He considers popular song as a reflex of primitive life; in its wild, irregular rhythm he feels the heart-beat of a youthful, impulsive people; its simple directness he contrasts with the false rhetoric of modern book lyrics.[30] The wilder, that is, the fuller of life and freedom a people is, the wilder, that is, the fuller of life, freedom, and sensuous power must be its songs. The further removed a people is from artificial thought and scientific language, the less its songs are made for print and paper, the richer are they in lyric charm and wealth of imagery. A savage[31] either is silent, or he speaks with an unpremeditated firmness and beauty which a civilized European cannot equal; every word of his is clearly cut, concrete, living, and seems to exhaust what it is meant to express; his mind and his tongue are, as it were, tuned to the same pitch. Even in the apparent abruptness and incoherency of popular song Herder sees an element of beauty rather than a defect, inasmuch as it results from the natural attitude of the unperverted mind toward the outer world.[32]

"All the songs of primitive peoples turn on actual things, doings, events, circumstances, incidents, on a living, manifold world. All this the eye has seen, and since the imagination reproduces it as it has been seen, it must needs be reproduced in an abrupt, fragmentary manner. There is no other connection between the different parts of these songs than there is between the trees and bushes of the forest, the rocks and caverns of the desert, and between the different scenes of the events themselves. When the Greenlander tells of a seal-hunt, he does not so much relate as paint with words and gestures single facts and isolated incidents: they are all parts of the picture in his soul.

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[30] *Werke* V, 164. [31] *Ib.* 181. [32] *Ib.* 196 f.

When he laments the death of a beloved one, he does not deliver a eulogy or preach a funeral sermon, he *paints*, and the very life of the departed, summoned up in a succession of striking situations, is made to speak and to mourn."

And not only the Greenlander, not only a rude and primitive people, feel and sing in this manner. All the great poets of the world do the same; Homer, Sophocles, David, Luther, Shakspere—they all reflect the life which surrounds them, they give us, as it were, instantaneous pictures of humanity as they saw it; and thus they become for us an epitome of their time and their nation. Herein, above all, lies the incalculable importance of Shakspere for us of to-day.[33] For Shakspere more fully than any other poet has expressed the secret of our own life. He reflects the character of the Germanic race in its totality. He seems to have heard with a thousand ears and to have seen with a thousand eyes; his mind seems to have been a storehouse of countless living impressions. King and fool, beggar and prince, madman and philosopher, angels and devils in human form; the endless variety of individuals and class-types; the sturdy endeavour, the reckless daring of a people, hardened in the battle with wild elements, passionate but faithful, lusty and sensual but at the same time longing for a deeper truth and a purer happiness; —all this we see in his dramas in bold and striking outline, and in it all we recognise our own self heightened and intensified.

Shakspere.

A few words may suffice to indicate how this same train of thought runs through nearly all of Herder's later writings. In the essay *Von Aehnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst* (1777)[34] he held out the prospect of a history of civilization based upon the various national literatures, thus clearly

History of civilization.

[33] Cf. the essay *Shakespear; ib.* 219.

[34] *Werke* IX, 532 f.

formulating the problem which literary history has been trying to solve ever since. In the *Volkslieder* of 1778 and 1779 [35] he laid the foundation for a comparative study of literature by collecting and translating with wonderful insight and faithfulness popular songs and ballads from all over the globe; a collection which in 1803 he supplemented by the most finished and artistically perfect of his poetical works, a reproduction of the old Spanish romances of the *Cid.*[36] In the book *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie* (1782–83) [37] he considered the poetry of the Bible from the same point of view. In the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91) [38] he represented the whole history of mankind as a succession of national organisms; each revolving around its own axis; each living out its own spirit; each creating individual forms of language, religion, society, literature, art; and each by this very individualization of national types helping to enrich and develop the human type as a whole.

Ideal of humanity.

To repeat: In Herder's mind there were united the prevailing tendencies of two centuries. With the eighteenth century he believed in freedom, humanity, individuality. From national arrogance and prejudice he was as far removed as Lessing. "Among all the forms of pride," he says in the *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (1793–97),[39] "I consider national pride the greatest folly. Let us contribute as much as we can to the honour of our nation; let us defend it, if it is wronged. To praise it *ex professo* seems to me an inane self-glorification." The advancement of mankind through self-perfection of the individual was to him, as it was to his contemporaries, the

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[35] *Werke* XXV, 127 f.
[36] *Werke* XXVIII, 399 ff.
[37] *Werke* XI, 213 ff. XII, 1 ff.
[38] *Werke* XIII. XIV.
[39] IV, 42; *Werke* XVII, 211.

highest concern of life, and nobody has spoken more nobly or eloquently of it than he.[40]

"Whatever belongs to the nature of our race, every possible means of its improvement and progress, this is the object which a humane man has in mind, this is the centre of his work. Since our race must work out its own destiny, none of its members has a right to be idle in this work. Every one must take part in the weal and woe of the whole, every one must willingly sacrifice his share of reason, his mite of activity, to the genius of the race. No one, however, can contribute to the welfare of mankind who does not make himself what he can and ought to be made. Every one, therefore, must cultivate the seed of humanity, most of all, on the bed where he himself is planted. We all carry in us an ideal of what we ought to be and are not. The dross which we ought to cast away, the perfection which we ought to attain, we all know. And since we can become what we ought to be only through ourselves and others from whom we receive or whom we affect, our own humanity necessarily becomes at one with the humanity of others."

In all this we hear the son of the age of enlightenment, the apostle of toleration and cosmopolitanism. But we also see the point where Herder lifts himself above the level of his own age, where he reaches out into the nineteenth century. Enthusiastic individualist that he was, he was at the same time the first great modern collectivist. Every individual was to him a public character, an heir of all the ages, an epitome of a whole nation. He first among modern thinkers considered man in the fulness of his instincts, in the endless variety of his relations to the larger organisms of which he is a part. He first attempted on a large scale to represent all history as an unbroken chain of cause and effect, or rather as a grand living whole in whose development no atom is lost, no force is wasted. As he himself says in that wonderful apotheosis of humanity, the fifteenth book of the *Ideen*[41]:

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[40] *Briefe z. Bef. d. Humanität* III, 32; *l. c.* 153.
[41] XV, 4. 5; *Werke* Hempel XI, 193 ff.

"If no sunbeam that ever fell upon our earth has been lost, no withered leaf fallen from a tree, no corpse of a decaying animal, no seed blown away by the wind, how much less could an action of a conscious being have remained without effect? Every one of the living generations has progressed within the limits which other generations put to it; and the industry of man as well as the madness of his ravages has become an instrument of life in the hands of time. Upon the ruins of destroyed cities there arise verdant fields, cultivated by a new, hopeful people. Divine Omnipotence itself cannot ordain that effect should not be effect; it cannot change the earth to what it was a thousand years ago. Let any one of our day try to sing an Iliad, to write like Æschylus, Sophocles, or Plato; it is impossible. The simple childlike frame of mind, the naïve way of looking at the world which the Greeks possessed, are irrevocably things of the past. We, on the other hand, have and know a great many things of which neither Greeks, nor Jews, nor Romans knew. One century has taught the other; tradition has become fuller; history, the muse of time, speaks now with a hundred voices, blows on a hundred flutes. And even the confusion which has resulted from this enormous increase of knowledge is a necessary part of human progress. All beings have their centre in themselves, and each stands in a well-proportioned relation to all the rest; they all depend on the equilibrium of antagonistic forces, held together by one central organizing power. With this certainty for a guide, I wander through the labyrinth of history and see everywhere harmonious, divine order. For whatever can happen, happens; whatever can work, does work. Reason only and justice abide; madness and folly destroy themselves. It is a beautiful thing to dream of a future life, to imagine one's self in friendly intercourse with all the wise and good men who ever worked for humanity and entered the higher land with the sweet reward of accomplished labour. But, in a certain sense, history also opens to us these delightful bowers of friendship and discourse with the upright and thoughtful of all times. Here Plato stands before me: there I hear Socrates's kindly questionings, and share in his last fate. When Marcus Antoninus in his chamber communes with his heart, he also speaks to mine; and poor Epictetus gives commands more powerful than those of a king. The ill-starred Tullius, the unfortunate Boëthius speak to me, confiding to me the circumstances of their lives, the anguish and the comfort of their souls. Thus history leads us, as it were, into the council

of fate, teaches us the eternal laws of human nature, and assigns to us our own place in that great organism in which reason and goodness have to struggle, to be sure, with chaotic forces, but always, according to their very nature, must create order and go forward on the path of victory."

2. Kant.

Reconciliation of empiricism and idealism in the Kantian philosophy.

While Herder conceived of all history as a conscious or unconscious striving after a harmonious blending of individual and collective forces, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) discovered this same ideal as a regulative law of the intellectual and moral nature of man. In Kant there converged the strongest philosophical tendencies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the same manner in which the strongest religious tendencies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries converged in Luther. Luther, by combining in himself the Mystic and the Humanistic movement, revolutionized the mediæval church. Kant, by combining in himself both the empiricism and the idealism of his predecessors, revolutionized modern thought.

The empirical character of human knowledge.

Developing, correcting, and systematizing the ideas of English empiricism, he demonstrated in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781)[42] the subjective character of all human knowledge. Human knowledge consists of two fundamental elements: matter and form. The matter is furnished to us by experience. Without sense impressions, without a tangible, visible world our mind would be without any contents; science would be without an objective basis. There are no demonstrable truths except those which can be verified by empirical experience. Questions which are beyond the reach of empirical experience, such as: Is there a God? Is there freedom

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[42] *Sämmtl. Werke in chronol. Reihenf.* ed. Hartenstein III.—For Herder's ill-tempered attacks against the Kantian system, which, however, in no way disprove the essential harmony of the two men with regard to the ultimate ideals of life, cf. Haym, *Herder* II, 651 ff.

of the human will? Is there immortality of the human soul? do not belong before the tribunal of the intellect; from a theoretical point of view they are unanswerable. By its very nature, the human intellect is debarred from the infinite; its only legitimate study is the world as we see it about us.

Its subjective character.

But how do we see this world? In Kant's phraseology, What is the form of human knowledge? When we say: 'The stone is square, the tree is tall,' we seem to attribute squareness to the stone, height to the tree as inherent space qualities. In reality we describe the result of a certain process going on in our own nervous organism. When we say: 'The violet blossoms earlier than the aster,' we seem to attribute the early blossoming to the violet, the late blossoming to the aster as inherent time qualities. In reality we describe a certain state of our own self-consciousness. When we say: 'An explosion is produced through the tension of gases,' we seem to state an inherent relation of cause and effect between the two events. In reality we describe our own method of registering and classifying events. In other words, the three fundamental forms of all human knowledge, the conceptions of space, time, and causation, are not determinations or relations of *things;* they are subjective functions of our own intellect through which we see things. We see things not as they are, but as they appear to us.

Intellectual individualism.

Intellectually, then, the prevailing tendency of our life is an extreme individualism. Only the raw material of our cognition is found in the outer world; it is the mind which endows this raw material with a form. The object of our experience is a chaotic mass of sensations; our intellect through organizing activity transforms these sensations into knowledge. All nature as we know it is a product of the human mind. Each individual observer, inasmuch as he compels the objects to submit to the functions of his mind, is a law-giver, a creator.

If in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* we see Kant, starting from the premises of empiricism, gradually rise into the region of the ideal, we find him in the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788)[43] from the outset in the ideal sphere. It is here that he brings to a climax the ethical ideas of Leibniz and Spinoza; it is here that he formulates the religion of modern mankind.

Moral collectivism.

Our intellect is confined to the realm of the senses as the object of its activity; our will reaches out into the infinite. We could not hope, love, strive, struggle, in short, we could not live, without the conviction that this fleeting world of appearances is the manifestation of an eternal, spiritual world. To the intellect the ideas of God, of moral freedom, of immortality, are undemonstrable assumptions ; to the will they are necessary conditions of our life. If we cannot say: *It* is sure that they are real, we certainly can and must say: *We* are sure that they are real. In our own personality, in our spiritual organization, in the dictates of our conscience, we find a direct and absolute proof that there exists a moral order of things of which we ourselves are an integral part. The moral law is the most complete expression of man's highest dignity. It resides within each individual, it is felt by him instinctively as his innermost essence ; but at the same time it lifts him above his own self and connects him with all mankind.[44]

"Has not every man, even if he possess only a moderate degree of honesty, sometimes found that he eschewed a harmless lie by which he might have drawn himself out of a troublesome affair or perhaps even have helped a beloved and worthy friend, solely because he did not want to lower himself in his own eyes? Is not an honest man, entangled in a misfortune which he might have avoided if he had only set aside his duty, is he not upheld by the consciousness that he preserved and glorified in his own person the dignity of mankind and that he has no reason to be ashamed of himself or to fear the test of self-examination?"

[43] *Sämmtl. Werke* V, 1–169. [44] *Kritik d. prakt. Vern.; l. c.* 92.

In obedience, then, to the moral law, in submission to the voice of duty which speaks to every one of us from within his own self, there lies the true freedom of man. This is the central point around which revolves our whole existence. Everything else in this world of appearances is subject to doubt and misrepresentation; the dictates of duty alone are a direct and unmistakable revelation of the divine. They alone are exempt from all sensual admixture, they alone are rooted solely in man's spiritual being, they alone justify our belief in an eternal goodness and justice.

The moral law.

Thus, while Kant demolished, on the one hand, whatever was left of a religious system which saw in God an extramundane and extra-human sovereign, he firmly established, on the other, a belief which reconstructs the divine from the inner consciousness of man. We feel ourselves moral beings. This is the fundamental fact of all ethics and of all religion. This feeling assures us that "it is impossible to conceive of anything in this world or without which could without restriction be called good, except a good will; and this not on account of what it produces or effects, but solely on account of its intrinsic goodness." [45] This feeling gives us an unfailing guide of conduct in the maxim [46]: "Act in such a manner that the motive of thy will at any time might be made the principle of a universal legislation." This feeling teaches us that the aim of life is not individual happiness, but work in the service of humanity.

The modern religion.

Here again, as before in Herder, we see the point where the individualism of the eighteenth century, developed to its highest form, passes over into nineteenth-century collectivism. Personality was the watchword of the Kantian philosophy no less than of Herder's conception of history. But to both Kant

Rousseau, Herder, Kant.

[45] *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten; Werke* IV, 241.

[46] *Kritik d. prakt. Vern.; l. c.* 32.

and Herder personality meant something quite different from what it meant to their intellectual predecessors, Rousseau and the 'Sturm und Drang' enthusiasts. Rousseau and his followers saw in mankind an aggregate of free and equal individuals; Herder saw in it an organic whole, made up of a great variety of widely differing national types; Kant saw in it a community of moral beings, held together by the stern law of duty. The practical outcome of Rousseau's teachings was the anarchy of the French Revolution. The practical outcome of the teachings of Kant and of Herder was the regeneration of the Prussian state by men like Fichte, Humboldt, Stein, Scharnhorst—men who, on the one hand, represented the most refined individuality, who embodied the highest intellectual culture of their time, and who on the other, recognised the inexorable rule of the moral law, and who felt deeply the obligations laid upon each individual by the traditions of common national life.

Wilhelm von Humboldt.

One of these men has expressed in so characteristic a manner the idea of personality which was at the bottom of German thought at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, that his words may stand as a motto for this whole epoch. In his essay *On the Proper Limits of State Activity*, written in 1792,[47] Wilhelm von Humboldt undertakes to show that the whole aim of public life is to give the individual the fullest opportunity for unhampered development. The definition, however, which Humboldt gives of what seems to him the ideal individual is a striking proof of the height to which individualism had now risen, how far it had been removed from private selfishness and isolation, how replete with noblest humanity it had come to be.

"The idea of moral and intellectual perfection," he says,[48] "is large and full and inspiring enough not to need any longer the

[47] Published in full only after the author's death, in his *Gesammelte Werke* VII, 1 ff.

[48] *L. c.* 64 ff.

help of religious symbols. Even to him who has not accustomed himself to personify the sum total of all moral goodness in a divine ideal, this idea of perfection must be an ever-present incentive to activity, an unfailing source of happiness. Firmly convinced by experience that his mind is capable of progress in higher moral strength, he cannot help working toward this goal. The prospective annihilation of his earthly existence does not frighten him; his unavoidable dependence on external circumstances does not oppress him. His mind, conscious of its inner strength, feels itself raised above the changes of this world of appearances. If he, then, reviews his past; if he examines his course step by step, how by degrees he came to be what he now is; if he thus finds cause and effect, aim and means united in himself, so that, full of the noblest human pride, he may exclaim [49]:

> Hast du nicht Alles selbst vollendet
> Heilig glühend Herz ?—

how is it possible that he should feel the loneliness and helplessness which are usually associated with the lack of a belief in a personal, extra-mundane cause of the chain of finite beings ? Nor does this consciousness of self, this being in and through himself, make him harsh and insusceptible toward other beings, or shut out love and benevolence from his heart. The very idea of perfection which animates his whole activity projects his own existence into the existence of others. He is not completely imbued with the highest ideal of morality so long as he considers himself or others as isolated beings, so long as he has not attained the conception of a perfection to which all spiritual beings contribute as constituent parts. Perhaps his relation to his fellow-beings is all the more intimate, his sympathy with their fate all the more hearty, the more deeply he is convinced that their fate, as well as his, depends altogether on individual effort."

These, then, to sum up briefly, were the main features of the intellectual life underlying the classic German literature of the days of Weimar and Jena. In the first place, an absolute freedom from traditional authority. Probably never in the history of mankind has there been a period when men looked at things

The new Humanism.

[49] Cf. Goethe's *Prometheus; Werke* I, 162.

from as broad a point of view and with so little bias. Humanity in the largest sense was the chosen study of the age. Everywhere—in language, in literature, in political institutions, in religion—men tried to detect the human element and brought it to light with all the fearlessness of scientific ardour. With this boldness of research there was allied, secondly, a supreme interest in the inner life. Man was considered bound up, to be sure, with the world of the senses, and confined to it as the scene of his activity, yet essentially a spiritual being, determining the material world rather than determined by it, responsible for his actions to the unerring tribunal of his own moral consciousness. In the sea of criticism and doubt which had swept away traditional conceptions and beliefs this inner consciousness appeared as the one firm rock. Here, so it seemed, were the true foundations for a new religious belief, a belief which maintains that it is absolutely impossible to serve God otherwise than by fulfilling one's duties to men, and which considers the divine rather as the final goal than as the pre-existing cause of life. And lastly, there was a joyous optimism in the men of this age which could not help raising them into a higher sphere. They believed in the future. They believed in eternity. They believed that humanity was slowly advancing toward perfection, that a time must come when the thoughts of the few wise men, the dreams of the few poets and prophets would become transfused into the life-blood of the masses, when the good would be done because it is the good, when instinct and duty would be reconciled; and they derived their highest inspirations from the feeling that they themselves were workers in the service of this cause.[49a]

It will now be our task to see how these intellectual and moral ideals were reflected in the work of the two greatest poets of the age.

[49a] For the preceding pages cf. Paulsen, *Einl. i. d. Philos. p.* 306 ff.

3. Goethe and Schiller.

Goethe and Schiller stand to each other in a relation both of contrast and harmony, similar to that which we found to exist between Herder and Kant.

Difference in their views of life.

Goethe's chosen field of study was nature and the human affections, Schiller's was history and human aspirations. Goethe's prevailing attitude was one of sympathetic contemplation, Schiller's was one of energetic activity. Goethe, like Herder, looked at life as an organic whole of natural causes and effects. To live one's self out to the full extent of one's faculties, to promote in others the unhampered growth of individuality, to recognise the unity and reasonableness of the whole order of phenomena—this seemed to him the first and most necessary task of civilized man. Schiller, like Kant, looked at life as a continuous struggle for perfection. The victory of mind over matter, of the inner law over outer conditions, of the human will over the inevitableness of fate—this seemed to him the great problem of existence. Goethe strove for æsthetic universality, Schiller strove for moral freedom.

But in spite of these far-reaching differences of temper and genius, the mission performed by Goethe and Schiller for modern humanity was essentially the same. On the basis of the most complete intellectual freedom, unhampered by any bias of whatever kind, religious, social, or even national, they reared a structure of poetic symbols embodying the fundamental demands of all religion and bringing out the common ideals of all society and of every race.

Sameness of their ultimate ideals.

The typical man: man placed in the conflict between the sensual and the spiritual, but impelled by his inner nature to overcome this conflict; man inevitably erring and sinning, but nevertheless master of his own destiny; man naturally bent on rounding out his

own individuality, but through this very instinct forced into organic relation with the social and national body; in short, man rising to the stature of his true self, striving for a harmonious blending of all his powers—this was the ideal which inspired both Goethe's and Schiller's poetic work, as it indeed inspired all the highest artistic productions of the time, Mozart's *Don Juan* no less that Beethoven's *Fidelio* or Thorwaldsen's *Triumph of Alexander*.

Their part in the Storm-and-Stress movement.

Neither Goethe nor Schiller attained to this lofty height before they reached the years of ripened manhood. Both began in the tumultuous fashion of the 'Sturm und Drang' enthusiasts. Their early works, although fully revealing the extraordinary genius of both, were not so much creations of pure art as outcries of souls overflowing with compassionate zeal for struggling and suffering humanity.

Superiority of Lessing's master-works over the youthful works of Goethe.

If one remembers what a degree of classic perfection, what a noble harmony of substance and form German literature had reached in Lessing's master-works, one cannot help feeling that Goethe's and Schiller's youthful effusions marked a decided lowering of æsthetic as well as moral standards. Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), with its crude imitation of Shakspere, its looseness of dramatic structure, and its lack of true dramatic motive, forms indeed a striking contrast to the refined, compact, well-rounded proportions of *Emilia Galotti*. The languid sentimentalism of *Werther* (1774), the weakly self-indulgence of *Stella* (1775), become all the more manifest if compared with the healthy manliness of characters like Tellheim or Appiani.

Lessing's Faust and Goethe's earliest Faust conception.

Even the greatest of Goethe's creations, *Faust*, in its first conception, was of far less universal significance than seems to have been Lessing's conception of the same theme. No greater loss has ever befallen German literature than the mysterious disappearance of Lessing's *Faust*. From what we know

indirectly about this work,[50] it is clear that Lessing had transformed the sixteenth-century magician into a champion of eighteenth-century enlightenment. Faust was represented as an ideal youth, living only for the pursuit of wisdom, superior to all human passion except the passion for truth. The attempt to ruin this 'favourite of God,' to ruin him through the nobility of his own nature, through his burning thirst for knowledge, through his insatiable yearning for the divine, this was the part to be played in Lessing's drama by Satan and his associates. But from the very beginning the hearers were not to be left in doubt as to the final issue of this contest. For when, in the first scene, the satanic spirits set out for their task of seduction, there is heard a voice from above: "Ye shall not conquer!" It is hard to conceive of a similar harmonious issue of Goethe's *Faust* in its original form.[51] Here Faust appears, not as a champion of human reason, but as an apostle of human passion, as a despiser of tradition and order, as a reckless 'Sturm und Drang' individualist, whose lawless career, it seems, can only be expiated by death itself. Or is it possible to imagine any form of expiation except death by which Faust could atone for the foulest of crimes, the wilful corruption of a pure, innocent girl? Is it not intolerable to think that after Gretchen's ruin Faust should live on, regretful perhaps of the past, but without any suffering commensurate with the agony which he inflicted on her who loved him? And if this is true, if a tragic death is the only outcome consistent with the rebellious career of Goethe's Faust as originally conceived, how limited, how fragmentary does this conception appear compared with the grand outline and the wide perspective of Lessing's Faust idea!

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[50] Cf. Lessing's *Werke* Hempel XI, 2, *p.* 579 ff. Erich Schmidt, *Lessing* I, 369 ff.

[51] Cf. *Goethe's Faust in ursprüngl. Gestalt* ed. Erich Schmidt. W. Scherer, *Aus Goethes Frühzeit; Quellen u. Forsch.* XXXIV, 77 ff.

Crudeness of Schiller's early dramas.

Even further removed from Lessing's artistic refinement and intellectual serenity were the beginnings of Schiller. His first dramas, *Die Räuber* (1781), *Fiesco* (1783), *Kabale und Liebe* (1784), besides having all the faults of the violent and overstrained 'Storm-and-Stress' language, are in substance pathological rather than tragic. That an affectionate father acting solely upon the insinuations of an infamous slanderer should tear his most beloved son from his bosom and abandon him to abject misery; that this son instead of making a direct appeal to his father, instead of disentangling the whole web of lies and forgery by a simple statement of the truth, should fly off into the forest, gather a band of robbers about him, and declare war upon human society; that this whole train of horror and crime should have its origin in the cold villainy of another son whose dominant passion is evil for evil's sake—this is what we are forced to accept in *The Robbers.* Still more distorted and unnatural are the plot and characters of *Kabale und Liebe.* This scheming courtier, who, in order to ingratiate himself with his princely master, would drive his own son into a marriage with the prince's mistress, thereby wrecking his hopes for a union with a pure, innocent burgher maiden; this ecstatic youth, who, although fully aware of his father's intrigues as well as the unwavering faithfulness of his beloved, is through a most shallow stratagem made to doubt her, and thus to plunge both her and himself into death; this guileless burgher maiden who talks to the prince's mistress as though she herself had fathomed all the misery of a sinful life; this sentimental mistress who would fain arouse our sympathy by intimating that she has given away her honour, but not her heart [52]—how painful, not to say atrocious,[53] all this is! Even where, as

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[52] Cf. *Kabale u. Liebe* II, 1; *Sämmtl. Schr.* III, 390.

[53] To what extent *Kabale u. Liebe* reflects actual conditions and

in *Fiesco*, the characters are less abnormal and out of proportion, there is such a lack of simplicity and such a large admixture of the accidental and artificial in the plot that the whole fails to produce a compact and harmonious impression. How inorganic, for instance, and out of accord with the central action is such a scene as the death of Leonore, Fiesco's wife. Fiesco has made use of the republican conspiracy against the tyranny of the Dorias to reach out himself after the ducal crown of Genoa. He is now on the point of striking the final blow. The city is in revolt. Fiesco at the head of the conspirators is marching against the Doria palace. The fall of the reigning family seems imminent. The revolutionary leader is just about to throw off the republican mask and proclaim himself dictator. At this moment he is overtaken,—not by the inevitable consequence of his own guilt, but by a mere outward mishap. He kills by mistake his own wife. "Leonore," he exclaims,[64] "the hour has come: thy Fiesco is duke of Genoa;—and the most abject beggar in Genoa would hesitate to exchange his misery with my woe and my purple. A wife shares his misery;—and with whom can I share my splendour?" Here, Lessing would have said, we hear not the solemn voice of tragedy, but the hollow clamour of the melodrama. The true poet reveals to us the unerring law of human doing and suffering; Schiller here confronts us with the capricious lawlessness of chance.

Extraordinary effect of Goethe's and Schiller's youthful works.

All these defects of Goethe's and Schiller's early works are obvious and beyond dispute. And yet when we remind ourselves of the torrents of violent emotion let loose by the appearance above all of *Werther*, *Götz*, and *The Robbers*; when we remember that so cold and feelingless an observer of men as Napoleon carried a copy of *Werther* with him

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characters of eighteenth-century society, is well shown by J. Minor, *Schiller* II, 127 ff.

[64] *Fiesco* V, 13; *Sämmtl. Schr.* III, 153.

during the Egyptian campaign [55]; when we think of Mme. de Staël's laughing remark that this book was responsible for more suicides than the most beautiful woman had ever been [56]; when we recall what a German prince once said to Goethe,[57] that, if he had been God on the point of creating the world, and had foreseen that Schiller would write *The Robbers* in it, he would not have created it,—we may realize how far these works excelled those of Lessing in their immediate effect upon the imagination and morals of the time.

Their elemental power.

Here, at last, the revolutionary spirit of the age had found a body suited to itself. Just because there was nothing in these works of the moderation and self-restraint which characterizes even the boldest of Lessing's works, they were hailed, especially by the young, as messengers of a radically new order of things; their very eccentricities and abnormities were accepted as unmistakable tokens that the days even of enlightened absolutism were drawing to a close. These works seemed to restore to their rightful place the elemental powers and instincts of human nature; they seemed to demand peremptorily and with the assurance of immediate success what to Lessing was only a far-off ideal: the emancipation of the masses; they seemed to hurl against the rulers of Europe the words of defiance which Goethe's Prometheus addresses to the ruler of Olympus [58]:

Ich dich ehren? Wofür?
Hast du die Schmerzen gelindert
Je des Beladenen?
Hast du die Thränen gestillet
Je des Geängsteten?
Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet
Die allmächtige Zeit?

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[55] Cf. J. W. Appell, *Werther u. s. Zeit*[2] *p.* 43 f.
[56] Cf. Hettner *l. c.* III, 1, *p.* 165.
[57] Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* I, 206.
[58] *Werke* Hempel I, 162.

Und das ewige Schicksal,
Meine Herren und deine?
. . . .
Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
Zu leiden, zu weinen,
Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich,
Und dein nicht zu achten,
Wie ich!

It is interesting to observe how even these early works of the two men reveal the essential contrasts in their mental physiognomy, and how they at the same time point to the common ideal of humanity which after all inspired the work of both.

Difference in the physiognomy of Goethe's and Schiller's early works.

Goethe's characters are receptive rather than initiative, emotional rather than reasoning, deep rather than strong, gentle rather than heroic, types of inner life rather than of outer activity. Even the manliest of them all, Götz von Berlichingen, does not so much determine circumstances as he is determined by them; he becomes a rebel not because he wants to revolutionize the present, but because he wants to uphold the past; he is ruined not so much through what he does as through what he is: a trusting, faithful, upright man, standing alone in a world of meanness, treachery, and rascality. He is the victim of a time in which, to use the words which Goethe himself prefixed to his drama,[59] "the heart of the people has been trampled into the mud, and is no longer capable of a noble sentiment." The same thing, only much more emphatically, is true of Werther. He, too, is a victim of his conditions. He harbours within him a world of feeling and thought; he would embrace the universe with loving arms; he understands the language of the brook and the

Goethe's characters types of inner life.

[59] I.e., to the first version of 1771–72, which was published only in the posthumous works. The quotation is from Haller's didactic novel *Usong*.

trees no less than that of the human heart; he sympathizes with all that lives and breathes, with the worm in the grass no less than with the spirit of Homer and Ossian; he is artist, philosopher, poet, philanthropist :—everything except a man! The conflicts of life grate upon him; the conventions of society distress him; he feels, or imagines himself, surrounded by miserable class prejudice and philistinism, and he has not the strength of mind or the firmness of will needed to make him a reformer. No wonder that when he feels the hopelessness of his love for Lotte, life ceases to be worth living.

"A veil has been removed from my soul," he writes,[60] "and the scene of infinite life changes before me into the abyss of an eternally open grave. Can you say: 'this is !', since everything passes away, since everything with the swiftness of a thunder-storm rolls past, so rarely living out the whole strength of its existence, so continually swept into the current, tossed about, and crashed against the rocks? There is not a moment which does not consume thee and thine about thee, not a moment when thou art not, must not be, a destroyer. The most harmless pleasure-walk costs the life of a thousand poor worms, a step of thy foot annihilates the laborious structures of the ants and stamps a little world into an ignominious grave. Ah ! not the colossal and rare calamities of the world, these floods which wash away your villages, these earthquakes which devour your cities, move me; my heart is undermined by the consuming power which lies hidden in the universe of nature, which has produced nothing that did not destroy its neighbours and itself. And so I reel in anguish. Heaven and earth and their restless forces about me: I see nothing but an ever-devouring, ever-annihilating monster."

What is it, finally, that makes Faust's character? Surely not that which distinguishes Marlowe's Dr. Faustus or even, though in a lesser degree, the hero of the German puppet-play. Marlowe's Faustus craves extraordinary power; he broods over colossal plans; like a true Englishman he wants to rule men and to master the elements.[61]

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[60] Letter of Aug. 18; *Werke* XIV, 59 f.

[61] Marlowe's *Faustus* ed. Breymann *v.* 343 ff.

Had I as many soules as there be starres,
Ide giue them al for Mephastophilis :
By him Ile be great Emprour of the world,
And make a bridge through the moouing ayre,
To passe the Ocean with a band of men,
Ile joyne the hils that binde the Affricke shore,
And make that land continent to Spaine,
And both contributory to my crowne:
The Emprour shal not liue but by my leaue,
Nor any Potentate of Germany.

Goethe's Faust, as a true German of the eighteenth century, is a dreamer and an idealist. What he craves is not power, but a sight of the divine. He is sick of words, he longs for an intuition of the truly real, he longs to understand the inner working of nature, to fathom the law of life, he is drunk with the mysteries of the universe. But alas! this soaring idealist is after all but of the earth earthy. By the side of the spiritual longing which lifts him above himself

into the high ancestral spaces

there dwells within him the sensual instinct which

with tenacious organs holds in love
And clinging lust the world in its embraces.

And in the conflict between these "two souls within his breast" Faust spends the best of his vitality.

Schiller's heroes types of outward activity.

What a contrast to this feminine fulness and ripe inwardness of Goethe's characters are the rugged, aggressive figures of Schiller's muse, eager for public life and for public deeds! "Fie! fie upon this weak effeminate age," exclaims the robber Moor,[62] "fit only to ponder over the deeds of former times, and to torture the heroes of antiquity with commentaries, or mangle them in tragedies. Am I to squeeze my body into stays, and straitlace my will in the trammels of law? What might have risen to an eagle's flight has been reduced

[62] *Die Räuber* I, 2; *Sämmtl. Schr.* II, 29 f. The trsl. is Bohn's.

to a snail's pace, by law. Nevei yet has law formed a great man; 'tis liberty that breeds giants and heroes. Oh that the spirit of Hermann still glowed in his ashes! Set me at the head of an army of fellows like myself, and out of Germany shall spring a republic compared with which Rome and Sparta will be but nunneries." *Fiesco*, "a republican tragedy," as Schiller significantly calls it, deals from beginning to end with the great affairs of state; and if the hero of the play, seduced by selfish ambition, deserts the common cause, his very selfishness is so colossal and awe-inspiring that we seem to see in it, not the emotion of a single individual, but the bursting into existence of a mighty collective will. It is as though we heard History herself in that monologue of his in which he decides to become a traitor to liberty.[63]

"Is the armour which encases the pigmy's feeble frame suited to the giant?—This majestic city mine!—To flame above it like the god of day! To rule over it with a monarch mind! To hold in subjection all the raging passions, all the insatiable desires in this fathomless ocean! To obey or to command!—A fearful dizzying gulf that absorbs whate'er is precious in the eyes of men: the trophies of the conqueror, the immortal works of science and of art, the voluptuous pleasures of the epicure, the whole wealth encompassed by the seas!—To obey or to command! To be or not to be!—The space between is as wide as from the lowest depths of hell to the throne of the Almighty."

And lastly, *Kabale und Liebe*. What is this drama if not a political manifesto, an *Emilia Galotti* intensified and exaggerated, a literary anticipation of the social upheaval of 1789? None of the Storm-and-Stress writings gives so merciless and glaring a picture of the unspeakable rottenness of *ancien régime* society, none unfolds so impetuously and boldly the standard of the revolution as this drama; in none of them is there a scene which goes so directly to the

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[63] *Fiesco* III, 2; *l. c.* III, 83 f. Bohn's trsl.

core of popular misery as the interview between Lady Milford, the prince's mistress, and the old valet whose two sons were among some seven thousand young men who were sold by the prince to the English to be marched off to America.[64]

"*Lady:* But they went not by compulsion?

Valet (*laughing bitterly*): Oh dear no! they were all volunteers! Some forward fellows, to be sure, stepped out before the line and asked the colonel at what price a yoke the prince was selling men. But our most gracious lord had all the regiments march out on the parade-ground and the impertinent fellows shot down. We heard the muskets ring, saw their brains spatter the pavement, and the whole army shouted 'Hurrah for America!'

Lady: Good God! and I heard nothing, noticed nothing.

Valet: Well, gracious lady—how did you happen to be riding with his highness off to the bear-hunt just as they struck up the signal for marching? You ought not to have lost the fine sight when the rolling drums announced to us that it was time; and here wailing orphans followed a living father, and there a mad mother ran to spit her sucking child upon the bayonets, and how they hewed bride and bridegroom apart with sabre-cuts, while we graybeards stood there in despair and at last threw our crutches after the fellows. Oh, and in the midst of all, the thundering drums that God might not hear us pray! . . . At the city gate they turned and cried: 'God be with you, wives and children! Long live our good father, the prince! At the Judgment Day we shall be back!'"

Difference of artistic manner in Goethe's and Schiller's early works.

Schiller's heroes are what Goethe's are not, types of outward activity. Their inner life is less rich; their impress upon the world is stronger. They shape circumstances, they battle with fate, they are leaders of great popular movements, they are destroyers of usurped and oppressive power. Goethe's creations, as compared with the sharp contours and subtle shading of Lessing's character-drawings, glow in the full warmth and colour of life. As he himself poured forth his whole being in lyrics of unrivalled depth and

[64] *Kab. u. Liebe* II, 2; *l. c.* III, 393 f.

power, so the characters of his epic and dramatic fancy reveal themselves to us wholly and without reserve ; every one of them stands out roundly and fully, while the soft lustre of poetry is spread evenly over them all. Schiller strives for brilliant effects ; dark masses he hurls against floods of glaring colour ; instead of rounding out his figures he flashes a strong light on one side of them, and thus imparts to them a concentrated radiance which often makes them appear larger than they really are.

Sameness of ultimate moral aims.

As has been said already, in spite of these obvious contrasts of natural bent and artistic manner, there was in Goethe and Schiller from their very beginnings a unity of ultimate moral aims not less apparent. Götz von Berlichingen and Karl Moor, Werther and Fiesco, however widely they differ in range of thought and activity, after all stand for one and the same thing : a great and free personality, raised above the barriers of petty conventions and breathing in the pure air of the universally human. Ferdinand, in *Kabale und Liebe*,[65] throws away the privileges of rank and station for the prize of true womanly love. " Who can rend the bonds that bind two hearts, or separate the tones of a chord ? True, I am a nobleman, but show me that my patent of nobility is older than the eternal laws of the universe, or my scutcheon more valid than the handwriting of heaven in my Louisa's eyes : 'This woman is for this man' ? "—Egmont, whose first conception in Goethe's mind was simultaneous with that of Götz and Faust, is the very type of a personality overflowing with life, and in closest sympathy with all the healthy feelings that swell a human breast. How he revels in the joys of forest and field,[66] " man's natural element, where, exhaling from the earth, nature's richest treasures are poured forth around

[65] I, 4 ; *l. c.* 371.

[66] *Egmont* V, 2 ; *Werke* VII, 79. Miss Swanwick's trsl.—Cf. *Dicht. u. Wahrh. b.* 20 ; *Werke* XXIII, 102 f.

us, while from the wide heavens the stars send down their blessings through the still air; where, like earth-born giants we spring aloft, invigorated by our mother's touch; where our entire humanity and our human desires throb in every vein." How he delights in the sturdy independence of his Netherlanders[67]: "They are men worthy to tread God's earth, each complete in himself, a little king, steadfast, active, capable, loyal, attached to ancient customs. 'Tis hard to win their confidence, easy to retain it. Firm and unbending! They may be crushed but not subdued." How his countrymen cherish and adore him[68]: "Why are we all so devoted to him? Why, because one can read in his face that he loves us; because joyousness, openheartedness, and good-nature speak in his eyes; because he possesses nothing that he does not share with him who needs it, ay, and with him who needs it not." How Klärchen's humble heart swells up at the thought of him[69]: "This chamber, this lowly house, is a paradise, since Egmont's love dwells here. . . . There is not a drop of false blood in his veins. And, mother, is he not after all the great Egmont? Yet, when he comes to me, how tender he is, how kind! how anxious he is about me! so nothing but man, friend, lover!"—The Marquis of Posa, the central figure of Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1784–87), takes up the part of Lessing's Nathan in pleading before the mightiest monarch in Europe for freedom of thought, for civil rights, for the restitution of "mankind's lost nobility."[70] And Faust breaks forth into that wonderful pantheistic confession of faith, which is at the same time an apotheosis of humanity[71]:

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[67] *Egmont* IV, 2; *l. c.* 71.
[68] *Ib.* I, 1; *l. c.* 19.
[69] *Ib.* I, 3; *l. c.* 31 f.
[70] *Don Carlos* III, 10; *Sämmtl. Schr.* V, 2, *p.* 316.
[71] I, 3438 ff. (Weimar ed.). Bayard Taylor's trsl.

The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,
Folds and upholds he not
Thee, me, himself?
Arches not there the sky above us?
Lies not beneath us, firm, the earth?
And rise not, on us shining,
Friendly, the everlasting stars?
Look I not, eye to eye, on thee,
And feelst not, thronging
To head and heart, the force,
Still weaving its eternal secret,
Invisible, visible, round thy life?
Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart,
And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
Call it then what thou wilt,—
Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!

Goethe and Schiller in their full maturity.

We may now understand how this inner affinity of Goethe's and Schiller's views of life, this polarity, as it were, of their moral constitution, gradually drew them near each other as artists also, until in their ripest maturity they stood together as one man, as a twofold embodiment of the most exalted ideals of their age.

Transition from the individualistic to the collectivistic ideal.

And here we see again how the individualistic movement of the eighteenth century, after having passed through the successive stages of Pietism, Sentimentalism, and Rationalism, after having subsequently given rise to the revolutionary commotion of 'Sturm und Drang,' transformed itself at the height of its development into a new, ideal collectivism, thus preparing the ground for the great national and social reform movements of our own day. All of Goethe's and Schiller's greatest productions point this way. They all lead out of narrow, isolated, fragmentary conceptions of life into the broad daylight of universal humanity. They all tend toward the representation of human nature in its totality. They all prophesy a state of human culture where the goal of ex-

istence—an equilibrium between the sensuous and the spiritual, instinct and duty, egotism and altruism, the individual and society—shall have been reached.

Nor is it too much to say that the whole state of German culture during those golden Weimar days was an ideal anticipation of such a new era in the history of mankind. No people has ever produced within so limited a range of time such an astounding array of men devoted wholly to the highest tasks and the broadest problems of humanity. No people has ever freed itself so radically from the narrowing influences of race, tradition, and belief, as the Germans during the last decades of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Kant when he dreams of a future confederation of all states and peoples for the establishment of a universal peace[72]; Schelling when he conceives of the history of the universe as an interminable process of spiritualization and idealization[73]; Fichte when he speaks contemptuously[74] of "the earth-born men who recognise their fatherland in the soil, the rivers, and the mountains of the state of their birth, whereas the sunlike spirit, irresistibly attracted, will wing its way wherever there is light and liberty"; Schleiermacher when he represents[75] as truly religious, not him "who believes in holy scriptures, but him who needs no holy scriptures, or who might produce a holy scripture himself" —they all were inspired with the idea of a nobler, fuller, more perfect type of man.

Height of eighteenth-century culture.

It must be admitted that there was an element of moral weakness in this absolute intellectual freedom; that by

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[72] Cf. the essay *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795); *Werke* VI, 405 ff. Kuno Fischer, *Gesch. d. neueren Philos.* IV, 231 ff.

[73] Cf. his *Abhandlungen z. Erl. d. Idealismus d. Wissenschaftslehre* (1796. 97) III; *Sämmtl. Werke* I, 386 f.

[74] *Grundzüge d. gegenw. Zeitalters* (1804) XIV; *Sämmtl. Werke* VII, 212.

[75] *Reden über d. Religion*, ed. of 1799, *p.* 108.

overstepping the limits of race and creed these men overstepped the limits of nature itself; that their unbounded worship of Greek civilization, which to them stood for the noblest symbol of a perfect individuality, revealed a lack of sympathy with their own homely surroundings; that their message was addressed not to the people at large, but to the cultivated few who were able to follow their aerial flights. But it nevertheless remains true that without the exalted creations of their thought and fancy there would be to-day no German nation; and history would lack one of the most striking instances of collective organization born of individualistic ideals.

Goethe's manhood.

In Goethe's life this period of transition to the fullest harmony and completeness is marked, apart from the greater number of his finest lyrics, by *Iphigenie* (1787), *Tasso* (1790), *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–96), *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797), and what may be called the second conception of *Faust*, (fixed between 1797 and 1808); in Schiller's life by nearly all of his lyric and ballad poetry, by the *Letters on the Æsthetic Education of Man* (1795) and kindred essays, and by the five great dramas, from *Wallenstein* (1798–99) to *Wilhelm Tell* (1804).

Iphigenie.

It is hardly necessary to dwell here on the often-drawn comparison between Goethe's *Iphigenie* and the *Iphigeneia* of Euripides. Suffice it to say, what has also often been said before, that Goethe by freeing the Greek legend from national limitation, by imbuing it with a spirit of universal sympathy, by substituting for the conflict between the gods and mortals, between Greek and barbarian, the conflict of the human heart between its lower and its higher promptings, has given to this pathetic story its final and eternal form.[76]—In the background there lies

[76] Cf. *GG.* § 233 (*p.* 500 f.). For the relation of Goethe's drama to the art of Racine and Gluck see Scherer, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.*

the dark night of Tartarus. We hear, it seems, the muffled groan of the fettered Titans rising from it. We see in less dim outline the curse-laden heroic figures of the sons of Tantalus. Nameless horrors committed by one generation after another,—Atreus slaughtering his brother's children; Agamemnon slain by his wife and her wanton lover; the death of Klytemnæstra at the hands of her only son,—loom up before us in gigantic and shadowy proportions. And as a living embodiment of the crime-begetting power of crime there rushes upon the scene, plainly visible in the foreground of the action, the only male survivor of this self-destroying race, Orestes, the matricide, pursued by madness and despairing of life. Against this mass of accumulated horrors there stands out the pure saintlike figure of Iphigenie. She is the only one of her race whom the breath of perdition has not touched. In early youth a divine dispensation rescued her from the altar on which she was about to be immolated. Since then she has lived, far removed from the land of her birth, separated from all that is dear to her, in holy self-renunciation and devotion to duty, a priestess of humanity amid barbarians. It is through her healing hand, through contact with her pure humanity, that the frenzied mind of Orestes is restored to health and hope, that the ancient hereditary curse is lifted from the house of Tantalus, and a new era of human brotherhood and freedom is ushered in. Goethe's *Iphigenie* is the first great dramatic work which shows unmistakably the falling away from the titanic impetuosity and revolutionary bitterness of the 'Sturm und Drang' period; it is a poetic symbol of the purifying influence which the friendship with Frau von Stein exercised upon Goethe, of the classic serenity which the Italian journey (1786–87) shed upon his mind; it is a triumphal song of inner regeneration. The power of holiness over sin, of truth over deceit, of unselfish, all-

538 f. H. Grimm, *Goethe* II, 24 ff. Cf., also, Kuno Fischer, *Goethe-Schriften* I.

enduring love over wilfulness and gloom, of calm self-possession over tumultuous revolt, has never been more beautifully portrayed; in crystalline transparency and harmonious simplicity the modern stage has not its equal.

Tasso.

Torquato Tasso, still more exclusively than *Iphigenie*, deals with inner struggles and aspirations; although by no means lacking dramatic motive, it is not so much a drama as a symphony of thought and feeling, revealing the deepest chords of Goethe's own spiritual experience. Here, too, we see a conflict between the diseased and the healthy, between a fragmentary and a comprehensive view of life. On the one hand, Tasso himself, the inspired artist, the worshipper of beauty, the lofty eighteenth-century individualist. He lives in a world of his own, peopled with the creations of his fancy.[77]

His eye scarce lingers on this earthly scene,
To nature's harmony his ear is tuned.
What history offers and what life presents
His bosom promptly and with joy receives.
The widely scattered is by him combined,
And his quick feeling animates the dead.
Oft he ennobles what we count for naught,
What others treasure is by him despised.
Thus, moving in his own enchanted sphere,
The wondrous man doth still allure us on
To wander with him and partake his joy.
Though seeming to approach us, he remains
Remote as ever, and perchance his eye,
Resting on us, sees spirits in our place.

On the other hand, Antonio, the man of the world. One might call him an ideal anticipation of the typical German of to-day. Stately, proud, self-possessed, he looks at life as a continual struggle of opposing forces, and he is sure to be himself on the winning side. Organization, discipline, official duties—these are the themes which he is fond of dis-

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[77] Words of Leonore, *Tasso* I, 1; *Werke* VII, 204. Cf. Kuno Fischer, *Goethe-Schriften* III.

cussing. He chactarerizes himself in characterizing his chosen model, Pope Gregory XIII.[78]

> The world lies spread before his searching gaze
> Clear as the interests of his own domain.
> In action we must yield him our applause,
> And mark with joy when time unfolds the plans
> Which his deep forethought fashioned long before.
> He honours science when it is of use,—
> Teaching to govern states, to know mankind;
> He prizes art when it embellishes,—
> When it exalts and beautifies his Rome.
> Within his sphere of influence he admits
> Naught inefficient, and alone esteems
> The active cause and instrument of good.

Between these diametrically opposed views of life, between these two characters who collide with each other "because nature did not form *one* man of both," the pendulum of the action swings to and fro. In the beginning our sympathies are altogether with Tasso. The modesty of the youth around whose head there flames the halo of immortal genius; the noble seriousness of his soaring imagination; his deep feeling for friendship which makes him exclaim[79]:

> Who doth not in his friends behold the world
> Deserves not that of him the world should hear;

the ingenuousness of his gratitude toward his lord and patron the duke Alfonso of Ferrara; the purity of his fervent passion for the gentle princess Leonora:—all this makes us see in him a true messenger of the divine. Antonio, on the contrary, impresses us at first as essentially narrow and earthy. He has that veneration for "solid facts" which so often is nothing but incapacity to see things in their true dimensions; he has no feeling for the rights of genius; he ill disguises his contempt for a life devoted to the problems of the inner self; he openly betrays the smallness of his

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[78] *Tasso* I, 4; *l. c.* 217. [79] *Ib.* I, 3; *l. c.* 212.

nature by begrudging the laurel wreath which Leonora pressed upon Tasso's forehead. In the hostile encounter of the two men Antonio appears as the representative of caste and courtly etiquette; he acts in very much the same way that the average Prussian official of to-day would act when embarrassed by the presence of an erratic advocate of individualism; while Tasso stands for personal nobility and the eternal demands of the human heart.

Nevertheless, the leading note of the poem as a whole is by no means the exaltation of the individual. It is rather a note of warning against excessive individualism, a plea for self-restraint, composure, and social endeavour. In this respect Tasso shows himself lamentably lacking. He has as little control over himself as Werther, he has no conception of his duties toward society. He whines and whimpers like a spoiled child, when he receives a well-deserved and friendly reproof from the duke for having violated, through his challenge of Antonio, the law of courtly conduct. Tormented by a groundless suspicion that the princess, too, has turned away from him, he completely loses his balance. He raves like a maniac when, as a consequence of his own impossible behaviour, a separation from the princess becomes at last inevitable. The man who from the depth of his bosom called forth a world of transcendent harmony and beauty succumbs in the conflict with real life. He would end, like Werther, in self-destruction, if here Antonio did not again step into the foreground, no longer as an enemy and rival, but as a friendly helper. While Tasso in the conflict with the outer world comes near losing himself, Antonio, as a witness of his struggles, has gained a new insight into the mysteries of the human heart. His own nature is expanded through sympathy with the poor, wayward dreamer ; he is able now to appreciate the inner suffering which is a necessary condition of great artistic achievement; he is prepared for a fuller understanding of ideal aspirations. Thus the symphony

dismisses us with a hopeful and harmonious finale. In the union of Tasso and Antonio we see a symbol of humanity enlarged and heightened, the harmony between the individual and society is held out as the ideal of the future.

The same theme underlies *Wilhelm Meister*, next to *Faust* the most distinctly autobiographical and at the same time the most universal of Goethe's works. As Wolfram's *Parzival* unfolds before our eyes the highest culture of mediæval chivalry, as Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* reveals to us the deepest misery of seventeenth-century absolutism, so Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* gives us the most complete picture of German society in its transition from *ancien régime* aristocracy to the modern aristocracy of the spirit.

Wilhelm Meister.

No more convincing proof of the outward limitations and the inner fulness of German life at the end of the eighteenth century can be imagined than this book. We of the present day feel more clearly perhaps what Goethe felt when in contrasting himself with Sir Walter Scott he once spoke [80] of the vast opportunities offered to the English novelist by the glorious traditions and the public life of his country, while he the German, in order to give animation to his picture, was obliged to resort to the most forlorn conditions of society, vagrant comedians and impecunious country gentlemen. We feel as though we could not breathe in this atmosphere, as though there was no chance for activity in a social order in which the main interests of modern German life, a national dynasty, a national parliament, problems of national organization, defence, and self-assertion, had no part. We even feel something akin to contempt for these men and women who keep a most

[80] Cf. *Goethes Unterhaltungen mit d. Kanzler Fr. von Müller*, ed. Burkhardt *p.* 55.—It was in a similar frame of mind that Goethe sought refuge from the hopelessness of contemporary politics in a rejuvenation of the old German animal epic. His *Reineke Fuchs* (1794) is indeed little more than a paraphrase of the Low German *Reineke*.

scrupulous account of their own precious emotions, who bestow the most serious consideration upon a host of insignificant trifles, and who, at the same time, only too often are found erring in the simplest question of right and wrong. The curse of dilettanteism seems to lie upon this whole generation. With no great public task before them, with no incentive to stake their hopes and to risk their lives for an all-absorbing common cause, what wonder that they —and the most cultivated of them most conspicuously—should waste their efforts in fictitious interests and unreal schemes, from Wilhelm's delight in puppet-shows to the fantastic symbolisms of the secret brotherhood, from the pietistic self-indulgence of the Beautiful Soul to Theresa's experiments in dress reform and the emancipation of women? With the exception of Mignon and Philine, the child of the past and the child of a day, there is not a single prominent character in the book capable of forgetting himself and living unreflectively and resolutely for the homely duties of the present. But while this is true, it is also true—and here lies the paramount importance of the novel for its own time as well as ours—that the one ideal running through its pages, the one goal for which nearly all of its leading characters are striving, is this very self-forgetfulness. Not the simple self-forgetfulness of the natural, gregarious man, but the acquired self-forgetfulness of the cultivated, individualized man, self-forgetfulness as the result of fullest self development and self-expansion :—this is the beginning and the end of the moral wisdom laid down in *Wilhelm Meister*.

And here we see the inner justification of that peaceful revolution which, as was said before, is reflected in this book: the transition from the class rule of the old hereditary nobility to the freedom of modern intellectual aristocracy. As Goethe himself, the great-grandson of a country farrier, the son of a Frankfurt citizen, had entered and illumined the court of the duke of Weimar, so Wilhelm by sheer force

of character and mind outgrows the bourgeois surroundings of his youth and is received into the aristocracy, not in the manner of a social upstart, but as a man the inner fulness of whose life necessarily demands and creates an outward form equally full and exalted.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the pre-eminently æsthetic drift of German life during this epoch than that Wilhelm reaches his goal by the roundabout way of an actor's career. Nothing could illustrate more clearly the ideal of culture held by Goethe and his contemporaries than the reasons by which Wilhelm justifies his decision to take this step.

"I know not how it is in other countries," he says,[81] "but in Germany no one except a nobleman has an opportunity for attaining to a well-rounded and, if I may say so, personal culture. A citizen may render useful service, he may at best cultivate his intellect; but his personality will be lost whatever he may undertake. The nobleman through his very associations is forced to acquire a distinguished bearing, which in course of time becomes a natural and dignified ease. As no house is ever closed to him, as he has to pay with his own figure, his own person, be it at court or in the army, he has every reason to be conscious of his worth and to show that he is conscious of it. A certain stately gracefulness in common things, and a species of light elegance in earnest and important matters, becomes him well, because he thus proves that he always keeps his equipoise. He is a public character, and the more refined his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the more collected and reserved his whole deportment, the more perfect he becomes. For the citizen, on the other hand, nothing is more fitting than a tacit consciousness of the limits within which he is restrained. The question with him is not, 'What are you?' but, 'What have you got? what discernment, knowledge, talent, or riches?' The nobleman gives all that he has to give in the display of his personal qualities, but the citizen cannot and must not give anything through his personality. The former is justified in

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[81] *Wilh. Meisters Lehrjahre* V, 3; *Werke* XVII, 278 ff. Cf. R. M. Meyer, *Goethe p.* 255 ff.—The overrefinement of German society of the time is strikingly illustrated by two novels of Goethe's friend Fritz Jacobi, *Allwill* (1792) and *Woldemar* (1794). Cf. Koberstein *l. c.* IV, 295 ff.

seeming, the latter is compelled to *be*, and all his attempts at seeming are ridiculous and absurd. The former must do and act, the latter only contributes and procures; he must cultivate some particular talent in order to be useful, and it is well understood that in his existence there can be no harmony, because in order to render one talent useful he must abandon the exercise of every other.

"I must confess that I feel an irresistible impulse to pursue just this harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied to me by birth. My wish to become a public character, and to widen my sphere of attraction and influence, is every day becoming stronger. To this is joined my taste for poetry and everything connected therewith, and the necessity of cultivating my mind in rder that I may come to enjoy only the truly good and the truly beautiful. You will at once perceive that the stage alone can supply what I require, and that in no other element can I educate myself according to my wishes. Upon the stage the man of cultivated mind may display his personal accomplishments as effectively as in the upper classes of society, his bodily and mental endowments must improve in equal proportion; and there, better than in any other place, can I assume the twofold character of seeming and of actually being."

The organic connection, then, of Wilhelm's theatrical experiences with the final aims of his life is perfectly apparent. As a necessary stage in his inner development they fully deserve the prominence given to them in the novel. We cannot help feeling that Wilhelm would have been more of a man if it had been given to him to train his powers in the conflict with real life. We should be more in sympathy with him if the goal of his ambition had been to be a Cæsar rather than to act Hamlet. But we clearly see why this was impossible, and we have no right to apply the standards of our own age to that of Goethe.

Our own life would be narrow and barren if we were to lose sight of the ultimate ideal of humanity held out in this work: the fullest and freest development of all human powers. This is an ideal so far removed from selfishness that it may be called the gospel of a secular Christianity. If the teaching of Christ rests on the belief that every individual soul has within it the possibility of salvation, the teaching of Goethe rests on the belief that every individual

mind has within it a tendency toward complete manifestation of itself. The former preaches the necessity of individual salvation in order to bring about the kingdom of heaven, the latter preaches the necessity of individual self-development in order to raise mankind to a higher level. The former is democratic, the latter is aristocratic; but both are opposed to spiritual tyranny of any sort. To both the inner motive, the mental effort, the moral striving are the things which decide the worth of a man. Both believe in the essential goodness of human nature, which makes it possible for us to preserve our better self even in error and sin, nay, to attain through error and sin to deeper insights and loftier ideals.[82]

Hermann und Dorothea.

As if to escape for a while from the perplexing problems of conscious self-culture, Goethe, fresh from *Wilhelm Meister*, turned to the representation of a life limited in its aspirations, hedged in by tradition, but sure of itself and complete in all its innocent simplicity. *Hermann und Dorothea* is the last and highest outcome of the idyllic undercurrent of eighteenth-century literature, the feeble beginnings of which we observed in the laborious descriptions of nature by Brockes and Haller, and in the Anacreontic trivialities of Hagedorn and Gleim. Until the beginning of the Storm-and-Stress period there was little either of thought or of life in German idyllic poetry. The full, sonorous strains of Ewald von Kleist's *Frühling* (1749) were after all without a deeper meaning. The dainty shepherds and shepherdesses of Salomon Gessner's *Idyllen* (1754–56) were as unreal and fictitious as Rousseau's

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[82] Of the affinity of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* to Wieland's *Agathon* we have spoken in the preceding chapter. It is interesting to note that, as Lessing called *Agathon* the only novel for thinking men, so Schiller said of *Wilhelm Meister*: "I could not be friend with him who did not appreciate this work" (letter to Goethe, June 19, 1795; *Schillers Briefe* ed. Jonas IV, 190).—Cf. J. R. Seeley, *Goethe Reviewed after Sixty Years* p. 120 ff.

dreams of the primitive innocence of mankind or the seraphic flights of Klopstock's imagination. Only through the new impulse given by the 'Sturm und Drang' movement to the observation of everyday life, through the new insight afforded by Hamann and Herder into the actual conditions of primitive peoples, through the new light shed by Winckelmann and his successors on the moral forces underlying the ideal of Greek simplicity, above all, through the masterly reproduction of the Homeric world in Voss's translation of the *Odyssey* (1781), the elements were given for an idyllic poem which, without leaving the firm soil of familiar reality, should at the same time open up a far-reaching ideal perspective. In the union of these elements there lies the peculiar charm of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea.*

In reading it we feel as if we were looking at a modern and a secular counterpart to one of those wonderful religious paintings in which a Van Eyck or a Memlinc embodied the idyllic side of mediæval Christianity. Memlinc spreads before us a landscape in which we easily recognise the distinguishing features of his own age.[83] We see towering castles on hilltops; cities surrounded by wall and moat, mighty cathedrals looming up in their midst; we see the farmer sowing and reaping in the fields; we see the tradesman laden with his wares, and troops of stately riders on the highway. The meadows are strewn with buttercups and daisies; birds are sporting in the air; flocks of sheep are grazing on the hillside, the shepherds with staff and bagpipe sitting close by. Charming as this familiar and homelike scenery is in itself, it yet points beyond itself to a higher spiritual life. The city with its Gothic spires and gables is Jerusalem; the knights on the highway are the Magi of the East with their retinue, travelling in search of the star of Bethlehem ; and the shepherds are accosted by

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[83] The following is a description of some scenes in Memlinc's Seven Joys of Mary, now in the Munich Pinakothek.

the angel of the Lord announcing the birth of the Saviour. In the midst of our own kin there walk the figures of a sacred past; the present is felt as a living part of an endless eternity.

In Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* there is no admixture of the supernatural, no heavenly figures mingle here with men. Yet here also we gain a calming sense of the kinship and essential oneness of all life. We see, as it were, a living illustration of what Schiller meant by his[84]

Und die Sonne Homers, siehe! sie lächelt auch uns.

Though German to the core, this poem is surrounded with the halo of Greek ideality; though instinct with the forces and problems of actual life, it represents types of a simple and pure humanity. Although it holds itself in the narrow circle of family experiences and village society, it reflects in this narrow circle the great movements of the world's history, the eternal round of decay and growth, of concentration and expansion, of stability and progress. The little village near the Rhine with its peaceful streets, its neatly stuccoed houses and gabled roofs, embowered in its vineyards and wheatfields, appears to us as a symbol of those sustaining forces of custom and tradition which connect our own life with that of the remotest past. The distant thunder of the French Revolution, the commotion caused by the passage of the emigrants, the striking individualities standing out among this wandering community, remind us of the equally enduring forces of change and development. Hermann, the chaste, self-restrained youth, the bashful lover, the loyal son, performing quietly the settled duties of each day; Dorothea, the thrifty manager, the ready helper, the heroic virgin, tried in homelessness and adversity, are the typical representatives of those two elemental tendencies of human life. Modest and restricted as are the surroundings in which they live, they move before us with

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[84] *Der Spaziergang; Sämmtl. Schr.* XI, 91.

the simple dignity of beings belonging to a higher order of existence, and in their final union we gain a glimpse of complete manhood and womanhood.[65]

The First Part of Faust.

From the sight of this complete, though limited and child-like existence Goethe, now in the fulness of his maturity, returned to the visions which had haunted his youthful years; he resumed his work on *Faust.* He resumed it a different man from what he was when he began it, when he conceived of Faust as a reckless individualist whose turbulent passion overleaps all bounds of law and tradition, burying in its torrent the dreams of happiness and peace and innocence. In the love of Frau von Stein Goethe had found a safe harbour for his affections; the sojourn in Italy had opened to him the full glory of classic art; the study of Spinoza as well as his own zoölogical and botanical investigations, in which he anticipated the modern theory of evolution, had confirmed him in a thoroughly monistic view of the world and strengthened his belief in a universal law which makes evil itself an integral part of the good; the friendship with Schiller had brought him into closest contact with a life which was a far-shining evidence of the power of the mind to assimilate and transform matter. How could a man who had gone through all this, who had himself experienced a complete inner regeneration, how could the poet of *Iphigenie*, *Tasso*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Hermann und Dorothea* resume a theme like *Faust* without reflecting in it this revolution of his inner self—in other words, without changing Faust from the rebellious realist of the 'Sturm und Drang' years into an ideal representative of struggling and striving humanity?

Among the scenes which reveal this momentous change in Goethe's Faust conception, the most important are the

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[65] Cf. W. Scherer's admirable analysis of *Hermann u. Dorothea*; *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 568; also, V. Hehn, *Ueber Goethes Herm. u. Dor, p.* 41 ff. 86 ff.

'Prologue in Heaven,' and the succession of scenes which in the completed First Part of 1808 fill up the gap left in the *Fragment* of 1790 between Faust's first monologue and his definite union with Mephisto.

The poetic framework even of these scenes can hardly be reconciled with what we should expect from a poem dealing with the ultimate problems of modern life. The very fact that the 'Prologue in Heaven' was modelled after the beginning of the Book of Job, where Satan amid the sons of God appears before the Lord, shows how little its artistic form tallies with its intellectual meaning. That Jehovah should converse with Satan about the conduct of his servant Job is perfectly consistent with the view of the divine held throughout the Old Testament. The modern conception of God, which Goethe himself perhaps more than any other man of his time helped to disseminate, the conception of the divine as the universal spirit in whom we live, move, and have our being, as the oneness of all forces, the harmony of all existence, this conception is so sublime and all-embracing that any attempt to contract it into the visible symbol of a separate personality must of necessity fail. The same, of course, is true of the modern conception of evil. Evil, according to Goethe's own belief, has no positive existence at all. It is merely the negative side of existence. It is the tendency to disintegration and annihilation, immanent in all life, and at the time, though in spite of itself, productive of life. To personify evil in Mephisto and to represent him approaching the Lord with the offer of a wager and engaging with Faust in a bargain for his soul, is therefore a most inadequate expression of the modern view of good and evil. We expect to be admitted into the mysteries of a harmonious universe, to see the unity of all life brought out in sweeping outline, and we find ourselves taken back to the mediæval dualism of heaven and hell.

If Goethe's *Faust*, then, from the highest point of view is

seen not to hold what it appears to promise, if it fails to be a complete embodiment of modern pantheism, it certainly is a complete embodiment of the modern idea of personality as related to its social environment. Restless endeavour, incessant striving from lower spheres of life to higher ones, from the sensuous to the spiritual, from enjoyment to work, from creed to deed, from self to humanity:—this is the moving thought of the whole drama; and although it is not until the Second Part that this thought assumes its fullest poetic reality, it is clearly outlined even in the First.

The keynote is struck for the first time in the 'Prologue in Heaven.' We hear that Faust, the daring idealist, the servant of God, is to be tempted by Mephisto, the despiser of reason, the materialistic scoffer. But we also hear, and we hear it from God's own lips, as in Lessing's drama we heard it through a voice from above, that the tempter will not succeed. Evil cannot, in the end, succeed. In its very nature it is a condition of the good. God allows the Devil free play because he knows that he will frustrate his own endeavour.[86]

> Man's active nature, flagging, seeks too soon the level;
> Unqualified repose he learns to crave;
> Whence, willingly, the comrade him I gave,
> Who works, excites, and must create, as Devil.

Faust will be led astray—"es irrt der Mensch so lang er strebt"; but he will not abandon his higher aspirations; through aberration and sin he will find the true way toward which his inner nature instinctively guides him. He will not eat dust.

For the second time the message of hope is heard in the 'Angels' Chant' on Easter Morning. Faust, after the pas-

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[86] *Prol. im Himmel v.* 340 ff. The trsl. is Bayard Taylor's.—For the *Faust* literature cf. *GG.* § 246. Among the most recent commentaries may be singled out H. Baumgart, *Goethes Faust als einheitl. Dichtung erläutert* (1893) and Veit Valentin, *Goethes Faustdichtung in ihrer künstler. Einheit dargestellt* (1894). Cf. Thomas's ed. *p.* vii ff.

sionate outburst of titanic feelings in the first monologue, after the rapturous delight into which the appearance of the Earth-Spirit had transported him, has been hurled back into "Man's uncertain fate."[87]

> The fine emotions whence our life we mould,
> Lie in the earthly tumult dumb and cold.

He is sick and weary. The same man who a short time before reached out into the spirit-world, who felt his own vital force beating in nature's veins, who was at one with the infinite life, is now like the worm,

> That while in dust it lives and seeks its bread
> Is crushed and buried by the wanderer's tread.

Death seems to him the only salvation. He is just putting the poisonous cup to his lips, when the Easter bells and the song of the angels announcing the resurrection of the Saviour call him back to life.[88]

> Christ ist erstanden !
> Freude dem Sterblichen,
> Den die verderblichen,
> Schleichenden, erblichen
> Mängel umwanden.
>
> . . . .
>
> Christ ist erstanden
> Aus der Verwesung Schoos!
> Reisset von Banden
> Freudig euch los !
> Thätig ihn preisenden,
> Liebe beweisenden,
> Brüderlich speisenden,
> Predigend reisenden,
> Wonne verheissenden,
> Euch ist der Meister nah,
> Euch ist er da!

To Faust this song brings back the memory of his youth, of the years when he could still believe and pray; to us it is at the same time a prophecy of his future, when he himself

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[87] *Faust* I, 638 ff. [88] *Ib.* 737 ff.

will rise from the thraldom of self-gratification, when in brotherly love, in work for his fellow men, he will work out his own redemption.

For the present, to be sure, his course leads down into darkness. But even on this path of gloom Faust never loses himself entirely. His gaze even here is turned toward the light. Again and again we see his ideal self shining forth through the disguise of sin and despair.

From the fatal pleasure-walk where the evil one for the first time joined him, he returns to his study, calm and refreshed. His spiritual nature has been awakened; he "yearns the rivers of existence, the very founts of life to reach"; he turns to the gospel of St. John and sets himself to translating its opening lines from the hallowed original into his "beloved German."[89]

> Geschrieben steht: 'Im Anfang war das *Wort.*'

How can the *Word*, a mere form, a name of a thing, not a thing itself, have been at the bottom of all things? Would not: 'In the beginning was the *Thought*' be a better translation? Thought, as the essence, the substance, the inner meaning of all life? But thought is not necessarily creative, thought sometimes remains without external manifestation. Why not then: 'In the beginning was the *Power*'? For power implies a tendency toward tangible results, it brings to mind the shaping and reshaping of matter. But power may be something merely mechanical. The formative principle of the universe cannot be merely mechanical; it must be something living, personal, conscious, active:—

> Mir hilft der Geist! Auf einmal seh ich Rat
> Und schreibe getrost: 'Im Anfang war die *That!*

It is clear that as long as Faust adheres to such resolute and manly convictions as these, the evil one has no power

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[89] *Faust* I, 1224 ff.

over him; and we understand why Mephisto waits for a better opportunity to lay his snare.

He finds this opportunity only too soon. Faust relapsing into a fit of pessimism curses all the highest joys and ideals of existence. Mephisto, on his part, holds before him the magic mirror of sensual lust, and now at last Faust is ready to make his compact with the devil. But even here, nay, here more conspicuously than anywhere else, does the inherent and ineradicable craving of Faust for a life of truly productive endeavour assert itself. His wager with the devil is nothing but an act of despair, and the very fact that he does not hope anything from it shows that he will win it. He knows that sensual enjoyment will never give him satisfaction; he knows that, as long as he gives himself up to self-gratification, there will never be a moment to which he would say: "Abide, thou art so fair!" From the outset we feel that by living up to the very terms of the agreement, Faust will rise superior to it; that by rushing into the whirlpool of earthly passion and experience, his being will be calmed and purified.[90]

Fear not that I this pact shall seek to sever!
The promise that I make to thee
Is just the sum of my endeavour.
Plunge we in Time's tumultuous dance
In the rush and roll of circumstance!
Then may delight and distress
And worry and success,
Alternately follow, as best they can:
Restless activity proves the man!
My bosom, of its thirst for knowledge sated,
Shall not henceforth from any pang be wrested,
And all of life for all mankind created
Shall be within mine inmost being tested:
The highest, lowest forms my soul shall borrow,
Shall heap upon itself their bliss and sorrow,
And thus my own sole self to all their selves expanded,
I too, at last, shall with them all be stranded!

[90] I, 1741 ff. The last seven lines are found already in the *Fragment*.

This is a pessimism which is bound to lead in the end to the highest form of optimism, this is an individualism which must at last develop into the most exalted collectivism. For it would be impossible to have such universal sympathies as these without giving expression to them in a life devoted to the common good of man; and a life thus spent cannot end in despair. The more deeply it is tinged with suffering and sadness, the fuller and deeper its joys will be, and the more firmly will it cling to ideal endeavour as the only true reality.

Schiller's manhood.

In a subsequent chapter we shall analyze the poetic form which this joyous and all-embracing idealism received in the Second Part of *Faust* and the other outgrowths of Goethe's old age. For the present we must return to the last and most mature creations of Schiller, and thus bring our review of the revolutionary era to a close.

Die Künstler.

In the same year with the outbreak of the French Revolution Schiller wrung from himself that magnificent dithyramb, *The Artists*, in which he for the first time unreservedly and without a remnant of the old 'Sturm und Drang' bitterness unfolded his view of the onward march of human civilization. Rousseau's conception of an ideal state of nature is here supplanted by the conception of an ideal state of culture. The history of mankind is represented as an endless striving for the perfect life; and art, man's noblest and most peculiarly human endowment, is held up as the greatest moral and intellectual agency of the world.

"Only through the morning-gate of beauty goes the pathway to the land of knowledge." Long before philosophy hazarded its dogmas, an *Iliad* solved the riddles of fate; long before science discovered the laws of nature, poets and artists divined the secrets of a living universe. Art freed the primitive man from the tyranny of the senses, and

transformed the gloomy materialism of the savage into a hopeful spirituality.[91]

Jetzt wand sich von dem Sinnenschlafe
Die freie schöne Seele los;
Durch euch entfesselt, sprang der Sklave
Der Sorge in der Freude Schoos.
Jetzt fiel der Tierheit dumpfe Schranke,
Und Menschheit trat auf die entwölkte Stirn,
Und der erhabne Fremdling, der Gedanke,
Sprang aus dem staunenden Gehirn.

But art stands not only at the beginning of civilization; her highest office lies in the future. Science, industry, commerce, social and political activity,—in short, all other forms of human endeavour appeal only to certain sides of man's nature. Art alone requires the whole man, she alone holds before us a vision of our complete self. Science criticises, art creates; the one dissolves, the other unites. It is the mission of art to lead modern humanity, disorganized and at war with itself, to that inner harmony of which primitive nature was an early promise, the highest fulfilment of which, however, will be reached through highest culture. Into your hands, then, O artists, is committed the dignity of humankind, with you to sink, with you to rise. Heed, oh heed the sacred trust! Disdain the vulgar and the transient, keep your eyes fixed upon the mountain heights of eternal beauty, point out to your fellows the ideal of a perfect culture and thus lift them above their own selves into the presentiment of a better, though distant, future.[92]

Borne on your daring pinions soar sublime
Above the shoal and eddy of the time.
Far glimmering on your wizard mirror, see
The silent shadow of the age to be!

In this poem we have an epitome of all the best and highest which Schiller's life, so prematurely and abruptly to be

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[91] *Sämmtl. Schr.* VI, 270. [92] *Ib.* 278. Bulwer's trsl.

ended, has given to the world. Again and again, in his prose writings, in his poems, in his dramas, we meet with this idea of culture as the source of his finest inspiration.

"Die schöne Seele."

It was this very conception of human nature in its totality which made it impossible for Schiller to accept the Kantian view of duty as necessarily opposed to instinct. Not in repression, but in cultivation, of the instinct he saw the truly moral conduct. The truest type of manhood he saw, not in the stern ascetic, but in what he called "the beautiful soul," a definition of which term he undertook in the admirable little essay on *Grace and Dignity* (1793).[93] "Not to perform individual moral actions, but to be a moral being, is man's destiny. Virtue, not virtues, is his task; and virtue is nothing but an instinct for duty. Nature herself by making him a spiritual-sensual being, that is: a man, enjoined upon him not to separate what she united, even in the purest manifestations of his divine self not to forget his sensual self, and to beware of basing the triumph of the one upon the defeat af the other. His moral character is safe only when it proceeds from his whole self as the combined result of both principles. The defeated enemy may rise again, the reconciled enemy is truly conquered." Here we have the constituent elements of a beautiful soul.[94] "A beautiful soul we call a state where the moral sentiment has taken possession of all the emotions to such a degree that it may unhesitatingly commit the guidance of life to the instinct without running the risk of conflicting with its decisions. A beautiful soul has no other merit than that it is. With an ease and freedom as though it acted only from instinct, it performs the most painful duties of life; and the most heroic sacrifice which it obtains from the will appears as a voluntary offering of

[93] *Sämmtl. Schr.* X, 99 f.—Cf. for the following Kuno Fischer, *Schiller-Schriften* III. IV. O. Harnack, *D. klass. Aesthetik d. Deutschen.* H. v. Stein, *Beitr. z. Aesth. d. d. Klassiker.*

[94] *Sammtl. Schr.* X, 103.

this very will." The highest culture has been converted into highest nature.

In the *Letters on the Æsthetic Education of Man* (1795) Schiller pursued this thought still further, and undertook to show that, under existing circumstances at least, completeness of character could be reached only through striving for beauty. From the autocratic governments of his time he expected nothing; nay, he saw in them the sworn enemies of genuine humanity.[95] "When the state makes the office the measure of the man; when it honours in one of its subjects memory alone, in another clerical sagacity, in a third mechanical cleverness; when in one case, indifferent toward character, it insists only on knowledge, in another condones the most flagrant intellectual obtuseness if accompanied by outward discipline and loyalty—is it a wonder that in order to cultivate the one talent which brings honour and reward all other gifts of the mind are neglected? To be sure, a genius will rise above the barriers of his profession; but the mass of mediocre talents must of necessity consume their whole strength in their official existence. And thus individual, concrete life is gradually being annihilated in order that the abstract shadow of the whole may drag out its barren existence." The only hope of the future, then, lies in the inner regeneration of the individual, and the royal way toward this regeneration is æsthetic culture. Man is fully man only in perceiving or creating the beautiful. For beauty arises only from the most complete and harmonious blending of the real and the ideal, of matter and form, of nature and freedom. Beauty[96] alone imparts to man a truly social character. The pleasures of the senses we enjoy merely as individuals, without the species,

Briefe über die æsthetische Erziehung des Menschen.

[95] *Ueber d. æsthet. Erziehung d. Menschen, Br.* 6; *l. c.* 290.

[96] Cf. *Br.* 27; *l. c.* 382 f. Cf. G. Schmoller, *Schillers ethischer u. kulturgeschichtl. Standpunkt* in his *Zur Littgesch. d. Staats- und Social-Wissensch. p.* 1 ff.

immanent in us, taking part in them. Our sensual pleasures, therefore, we cannot lift into the sphere of the universal. The pleasures of reason we enjoy merely as species, without our individual self taking part in them. Our intellectual pleasures, therefore, cannot enter fully into the sphere of personality. The beautiful alone we enjoy both as individuals and as species, that is: as *representatives* of the species; and the artist who creates, the public who sympathetically receive the beautiful, perform a service for society far greater than the so-called public services of the average diplomat and politician. They are workers for an ideal society which, although it may for ever remain unrealized, is bound to exert, even as a mere postulate, a cleansing and exalting influence upon society as it is; just as the idea of an invisible church has inspired far nobler movements and brought about far greater revolutions in the history of religious life than all ecclesiastical institutions taken together.

Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung.

From the heights of this conception of a complete humanity Schiller, in the essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795–96), reviewed the history of literature as an expression of this complete humanity, deriving from this review an additional proof for his own ideal of art. All poetry as we know it is either naïve or sentimental, that is, reflects the harmony of life either as an existing condition or as a goal to be striven for. Naïve poetry corresponds to a state of society where the harmony between belief and reason, between the sensual and the spiritual, has not yet been lost. This was the case in the best time of Greek civilization.[97] "The entire social system of the Greeks was founded upon natural instinct, not upon artificial reflection; their mythology even was the inspiration of a naïve feeling, the child of a joyous intuition, not the result of brooding reason, as the religious belief of modern nations is. In harmony with himself and happy

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[97] *Ueber naive u. sentimentalische Dichtung; l. c.* 444 f.

in the consciousness of his full humanity, the Greek had no incentive to go beyond himself except in order to assimilate the outer world to his own image; while we moderns, at war with ourselves and disappointed in our experiences of humanity, have no more urgent desire than to flee from ourselves and remove the disfigured form of mankind from our sight." Modern poetry, then, is essentially sentimental, that is: inspired with the idea of a nobler and more complete life than that which surrounds us. Our present age, with its artificial class distinctions, with its predominance of the intellect over sentiment, with its conflict between authority and freedom, with its philosophic doubts and its moral problems, is far removed from harmony of life. The completeness of human nature as a living force has no place in modern society. But all the more deeply do we long for this completeness and rejoice whenever we find it. This is the reason why the creations of a naïve genius, like those of Homer or Shakspere, move us so profoundly. This is the reason why we delight in the unconscious wisdom of childish play. This is at the bottom of our feeling for the simplest objects of nature, a flower, a spring, a mossy rock.[98] "It is not these objects, it is the idea manifested in them which we love. We love in them the quietly creating life, the calm working from within, the existence according to one's own law, the inner necessity, the constant harmony with one's own self. They are what we were; they are what we are bound to be again. We were nature like them, and our culture by way of reason and freedom is to bring us back to nature. They are therefore, on the one hand, a symbol of our lost childhood, which will be for ever the most precious memory to us; on the other hand, they are symbols of our highest perfection, which lies before us as the ideal of the future," and the way toward which it is the most sacred office of poetry and art to point out.

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[98] *Ueber naive u. sentimentalische Dichtung; l. c.* 426 f.

Let us now see how Schiller's own poetic works, so far as they belong to the period of his highest maturity,—the last ten years of his life,—have fulfilled the mission formulated in his theoretical writings; let us see how far they are symbols of a complete existence, in what manner they point toward the reconciliation of nature and culture, of matter and spirit, of fate and freedom.

Difference between Goethe's and Schiller's lyrics.

In point of time, his lyric and ballad poetry stands nearest to the prose essays. Here perhaps more clearly than anywhere else do we see the difference between his genius and that of Goethe. Goethe, to adopt Schiller's own phraseology, was essentially a naïve poet; while he himself was essentially sentimental. Goethe, although in closest contact with the manifold problems of a philosophic age and although incessantly at work in building out and adding to the "pyramid of his existence," always retained the inner harmony with himself and the world. His lyrics and ballads, therefore, as the most immediate outpourings of his inner self, are like the naïve strains of popular song, unconscious revelations of an unbroken existence. Heine's saying[99]: "Nature wished to know how she looked, and she created Goethe," is perhaps truer of this part of his activity than of any other. Whether in the rhythmic tumult of the Promethean rhapsodies of his youth, or the measured melody of songs replete with the full midday glow of self-possessed manhood, or the sibylline wisdom of epigrammatic verse reflecting a divine old age; whether in the simple true-heartedness of the *König in Thule*, or the healthy sensuousness of the *Römische Elegieen*, or the mysterious depth of the songs of Mignon and the Harper, or again in the magic lifelikeness of such visions as *Der Fischer*, *Erlkönig*, *Zueignung*—everywhere we see the welling up of a great soul, drawing its stream of

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[99] *Reisebilder* III, 26; *Werke* ed. Elster III, 265. Cf. V. Hehn, *Gedanken über Goethe* I, 281 ff.

life from the deepest recesses of elemental instinct, and pouring it forth with effortless abundance. Not so with Schiller. With him everything bears the stamp of conscious endeavour, of moral purpose. What lends to his verse such an irresistible power is not so much the wealth of imagination or the inner affinity with life in all its forms —in both respects he was far inferior to Goethe: it is the concentrated energy of a mind craving to bridge the chasm between idea and reality, bent on restoring to humanity its lost equilibrium, inspired with the idea of moral freedom. Among his ballads there is hardly one which does not represent in one way or another the conflict between the lower and higher in man, and which does not call upon the will to assert itself against the force of circumstance. Here is the source of the fiery eloquence, the—one might say—martial sonorousness that pervades these poems. "'Tis mind that shapes the body to itself" (Es ist der Geist der sich den Körper baut)[100]—this is what all of them proclaim; whether they exalt the struggle of man with the elements, as *Der Taucher;* or victory over self, as *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen;* or faithfulness unto death, as *Die Bürgschaft;* whether they give impressive pictures of national exploits and triumphs, as in *Das Siegesfest;* or whether, like *Kassandra*, *Der Ring des Polykrates*, *Die Kraniche des Ibykus*, they reveal the mysterious working of the world-spirit in the forebodings and catastrophes of the human breast. The same is true, perhaps even more emphatically so, of Schiller's lyric and didactic poetry. Here more clearly than anywhere else do we notice the absence in him of that childlike simplicity and sensuousness which is the sign of the highest poetic genius. But we also feel (what Beethoven must have felt when the *Hymn to Joy* inspired him to one of his sublimest symphonic achievements) that there is a strength of spiritual vision even in the most

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[100] *Wallensteins Tod* III, 13; *Sämmtl. Schr.* XII, 295.

abstruse and esoteric of Schiller's conceptions which give to them a moral suggestiveness and perspective such as is to be found only in the work of the few great men destined to be leaders of mankind toward the ideal life. Not to dwell upon the *Song of the Bell*, the popular ring and healthy common-sense of which appeal even to the most unsophisticated, while its noble symbolism reveals to the more searching mind the deeper significance and relationship of all outer phenomena,—what a wonderful power of giving bodily form to abstract philosophical ideas there is in such poems as *Das Ideal und das Leben* or *Der Spaziergang!*

Das Ideal und das Leben.

Well might Schiller write in sending the former to his friend Wilhelm von Humboldt[101]: "When you receive this letter put aside all that is profane, and read this poem in consecrated stillness." For it is a consecration song of noblest humanity, an imperishable symbol of ever active, ever hopeful endeavour. There glows in it the flame of Platonic enthusiasm strangely mingled with Christian resignation and Kantian rigour; there lives in it the modern faith in the attainableness of the ideal through devotion to the needs of actual life. Life is an endless struggle with matter; through work only are we delivered from the slavery of the senses; only the stroke of the chisel wakes from the marble block a beauteous form; truth is discovered only through unremitting self-surrender; the moral law sets us tasks which seem almost too heavy for our feeble shoulders. But the very trials and sufferings of mankind bring out its divine nature and insure its ultimate transition to an existence of ideal harmony and beauty, where matter and form are united and where the gulf between the human will and the moral law has been bridged. This is the essential thought of the poem, running in manifold variations through its first thirteen stanzas

[101] Letter of Aug. 9, 1795; *Schillers Briefe* IV, 232.

and then, in the last two, rising to that magnificent image of the apotheosis of Heracles, who, after all the toil and turmoil of his earthly career, at last soars aloft toward the Olympian heights, while under him the heavy phantom of life sinks and sinks and sinks.[102]

Froh des neuen ungewohnten Schwebens,
Fliesst er aufwärts, und des Erdenlebens
Schweres Traumbild sinkt und sinkt und sinkt.
Des Olympus Harmonieen empfangen
Den Verklärten in Kronions Saal,
Und die Göttin mit den Rosenwangen
Reicht ihm lächelnd den Pokal.

Der Spaziergang.

In *Der Spaziergang*[103] Schiller returned to a theme which he had treated before in *Die Künstler*. But how much firmer, how much more personal and concrete is the treatment of this theme, the progress of human civilization, here than it was in the earlier poem! From the gloom of the study, which to Schiller so often was a sick-room also, we see the poet, restored to health and hopefulness, wander forth into his beloved Saale valley[104] to enjoy once more the silent communing with nature. For a time he gives himself up to the fleeting impressions of the moment. He greets the mountain with its reddish summit bathed in the sunlight, he revels in the calm and coolness of the forest, he delights in the view of the valley below with its winding river and its hilly roads. But he would not be Schiller if he long contented himself with mere observa-

[102] *Sämmtl. Schr.* XI, 61.

[103] *Ib.* 83 ff.

[104] I am not unaware of the fact which, I believe, Hoffmeister was the first to discover (cf. his *Schillers Leben* III, 95 ff.), that there is a striking similarity between *Der Spaziergang* and a description by Schiller of the scenery between Stuttgart and Hohenheim (cf. his essay *Ueber den Gartenkalender auf d. Jahr 1795*; *Sämmtl. Schr.* X, 263 f.). It seems, however, likely that with these recollections of his Swabian home there mingled in Schiller's mind the impressions of the landscape in the midst of which the poem was written—the neighbourhood of Jena.

tion. The changing scenes of the landscape suggest to his inner eye the change of man in his development from primitive simplicity to complex culture, and the intermingling of these inner visions of humanity with the impressions received from brook and meadow and forest constitute the bulk of the poem and form its supreme artistic charm. How simple the scenery is which forms the background of this poem! In the distance the quaint little town of Jena with its crooked gables and its weather-beaten church-steeple. Round about us gently sloping hills, leading up to the barren plain where only eleven years after the writing of these lines the armies of Napoleon were to crush the Prussian state. At our feet the gently flowing Saale with now and then a raft gliding slowly down the stream; here and there a pleasant village half hidden in the green; poplar trees marking the line of the highway. And there this silent man with the noble forehead and the far-away look in his eager eyes! what a world of thought he harbours in his brain! How he revels in the airy apparitions which crowd upon him; how he delights in picturing to himself the innocence and happiness of mankind in its infancy; how he takes part in the quickened life and the higher tasks of growing civilization; how he lives over again the glorious times of Thermopylæ and Salamis; how his cheeks flush with enthusiasm as he recalls the golden age of Greek poetry and art; how his lips quiver with indignation at the thought of the vice and the oppression of modern society; how he bursts out into cries of mingled rejoicing and horror at the colossal achievements and crimes of the French Revolution; and how at last he takes refuge in nature, the ever-abiding and unchanging, to gain from her new courage and trust in the destiny of mankind! Here we have the noblest outgrowth of German didactic verse in the eighteenth century. Here we see again, as we have seen so many times before, the inner wealth, amid humble surroundings, of German life a hundred years ago.

The most complete artistic expression of his ideals of life Schiller reached in the five great dramas which mark the last crowning years of his earthly career: *Wallenstein* (1798–99), *Maria Stuart* (1800), *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801), *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), *Wilhelm Tell* (1804).

Wallenstein.

Whoever has seen *Wallenstein* performed as a whole, from the first bustling scenes of the *Camp* to the awful solemity of death which surrounds the final catastrophe, cannot help feeling that here is a world by itself, a universe of passions, hopes, fears, struggles, and aspirations. Wallenstein himself is undoubtedly the greatest dramatic character of German literature, and in all European literature since Shakspere it would be hard to find his equal. How this man looms up before us; how we at first feel him as an unseen power in the wild unruly hosts of seventeenth-century soldiery whom his will, and his will only, controls; how we then see him among his generals, a Cæsar in reality, if not in name; how act by act, and scene by scene, his figure expands; how his very foibles, his dark ambition, his fatalism, his treachery, nay, even his sullen reluctance to striking a decisive blow, serve to add a mysterious grandeur to his figure; until we hold our breath when Max exclaims [105]:

> This kingly Wallenstein, whene'er he falls
> Will drag a world to ruin down with him,
> And as a ship that midway on the ocean
> Takes fire, and shiv'ring srpings into the air
> And in a moment scatters between sea and sky
> The crew it bore, so will he hurry to destruction
> All us whose fate is joined with his;—

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[105] *Piccol.* V, 3; *Sämmtl. Schr.* XII, 197 f.—For Schiller's historical studies preceding *Wallenstein* (*Abfall der Niederlande* 1788, *Gesch. d. 30jähr. Krieges* 1791–93) cf. O. Brahm, *Schiller* II, 1, *p.* 206 ff.—An excellent guide to a true appreciation of Schiller's dramatic art is L. Bellermann's *Schillers Dramen: Beiträge zu ihrem Verständnis.* Cf., also, the brief but most judicious comments in *GG.* § 248.

all this is wonderfully conceived and carried out. But more wonderful is the way in which the downfall of this man appears from the very first as an inevitable consequence of his rise, as a demand of eternal law and justice. Not as though the adversaries of Wallenstein were representatives of this law. They are much more treacherous and lawless than he. This emperor who, when his empire tottered beneath him, turned to Wallenstein for rescue, investing him with a sovereign power incompatible with the duties of a subject, and who now is trying to steal this power from him; this Octavio, who, knowing that Wallenstein trusts him implicitly as his bosom friend, shadows his every step and betrays his most secret plans to the imperial court; these Isolanis and Butlers, the creatures of Wallenstein's fortune and munificence, who turn against him as soon as their self-interest is appealed to—how small, how mean they appear compared with the bold originality and frankness of Wallenstein himself! how well we understand his contempt for this whole system of sham legitimacy when he says[106]:

'Tis a foe invisible
The which I fear—a fearful enemy,
Which in the human heart opposes me,
By its coward fear alone made fearful to me.
Not that which full of life, instinct with power,
Makes known its present being, that is not
The true, the perilously formidable.
Oh no! it is the common, the quite common,
The thing of an eternal yesterday,
Whatever was, and evermore returns,
Sterling to-morrow, for to-day 'twas sterling!
For of the wholly common is man made,
And custom is his nurse.

No, Wallenstein's real guilt is not his treason to the emperor, not his revolt against the powers that be; nor is his

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[106] *Wallenst. Tod* I, 4; *l. c.* 216 f. Coleridge's trsl.

death at the hands of assassins his real punishment. All this is merely symptomatic. His real guilt is that he is a traitor to himself; and his real punishment is that he is ruined through himself.

Never has the inherent Nemesis that abides with him who through selfishness loses his selfhood, been more impressively represented than here. Wallenstein does not stand for any cause. Protestantism and Catholicism, the two great principles that stir his time, are mere names to him. The peace, the happiness of Germany, of which he occasionally makes so much, are really only a means to him of proving that he is the man of destiny.[107] He has no true sympathy with men. They are tools to him, nothing more. When he speaks of friendship, he simply means devotion to himself. He trusts Octavio blindly, because he thinks that Octavio cannot help serving him. He loves his daughter because he sees in her a pledge of his fortune. He loves Max because he feels that Max is rooted in his own existence.[108]

On me thou'rt planted, I am thy Emperor;
To obey me, to belong to me, this is
Thy honour, this a law of nature to thee.
And if the planet, on the which thou livest
And hast thy dwelling, from its orbit starts,
It is not in thy choice, whether or no
Thou'lt follow it. Unfelt it whirls thee onward
Together with its ring and all its moons.

In short, this man has sacrificed his better self to the demon of ambition; he has degraded his noble mind and his great heart to the service of selfish greed; instead of a blessing he has become a curse to his fellow men. And now we see how he becomes a curse to himself; how this very absorption in his own interests, this very infatuation

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[107] Cf. *Wallenst, Tod* III. 15 ; *l. c.* 300 ff.
[108] *Ib.* III, 18 ; *l. c.* 311 f.

with the sense of his own power, makes him, to adopt Werder's happy phrase,[109] the fool of his fortune.

Here is the source of his frivolous play with circumstance. Is not he the maker of circumstance? Has he not always been able either to accomplish or to leave undone whatever he wished? Has he not always been able to make his choice among a multitude of possibilities? Why, then, should he not entertain as a mere possibility this idea of an alliance with the Swedes? It is true, this alliance would make him a traitor to the emperor. But surely he is still far from concluding it; and whether he is going to conclude it, that depends entirely upon his own free will. Moreover, if it really should come to this, the success of the undertaking would certainly obliterate its moral baseness.—Thus the frenzied man deludes himself, not realizing that he is all the while drifting toward the very thing which he thinks he is avoiding: the necessity of acting under the stress of circumstance; not realizing that the mere thought of treason will force him to commit treason, and to commit it at a time when it will inevitably bring disaster on his own head.

Here is the source of his fatalistic belief in the stars. Is it not clear that he has been singled out by Fate to make the future of Europe? Is it not clear that he has been endowed with a superhuman insight into the mysterious interdependence of events? Is it not certain that he will know, know by intuition, when the right time has come to

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[109] Karl Werder, *Vorlesungen über Schillers Wallenstein p.* 115. Werder, of all critics, seems to me to have most deeply entered into the true meaning of Wallenstein's character. The connection between Wallenstein's exaggerated sense of his own power and his fatalistic belief in the stars is brought out by him in so forcible a manner as to make such strange misconceptions as the verdict of Hettner (*Gesch. d. d. Litt.* III, 2, *p.* 249: "Wer wird leugnen dass durch diesen seltsam fatalistischen Zug falsche Reflexe auf Wallensteins Bild fallen?") impossible in the future.

reach out his hand and pluck the fruit which is ripening for him in the garden of eternity? Thus this man of action becomes a visionary and a somnambulist. While his enemies are undermining the very ground on which he stands, while his adherents beseech him to save himself by bold aggression, he remains in his solitary immovableness, watching the heavens and waiting for a voice from the spirit-world.

Here, lastly, is the source of his blind trust in the chief instruments of his fall, Octavio and Butler. Octavio he calls his comrade, his most faithful friend, but of any true intimacy between the two men we see no trace. In the whole drama, Octavio does not address a single word to Wallenstein, and Wallenstein has nothing to say to Octavio, except to give him some military instructions.[110] It evidently does not enter his mind that Octavio leads a life of his own. What is that to him? To him Octavio is simply his own shadow, his own other self. And why? Not because he knows him; but because Fate has given him a sign about this man, because the World-spirit has pointed Octavio out to him as his guardian angel. And in the very scene which follows the account of the vision which assured Wallenstein of Octavio's friendship, Octavio hires his murderer!

Still more appalling, and yet so intimately allied with Wallenstein's character, is his blindness with regard to Butler. He has committed a piece of infamous trickery against Butler. In order to chain him all the more closely to himself and to inspire him with undying hatred against the emperor, he has brought upon his head an undeserved and humiliating rebuke from the imperial court. Butler, informed of this treachery by Octavio, is beside himself with rage and vows revenge. The crisis has been reached, Octavio has deserted Wallenstein, the army is in revolt,

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[110] *Piccol.* II, 7. *Tod* II, 1. Cf. Werder *l. c.* 157 ff.

even Max is throwing off his allegiance,—only Butler remains, Butler whom Wallenstein has so bitterly offended, Butler whose presence means death. And Wallenstein suspects nothing! He is so completely wrapt up in his own self, so inflated with his own greatness, the very reverses of fortune have so intoxicated him with himself, that not a thought of his guilt against this man occurs to him. He greets him with open arms, he presses him to his bosom, he tells him of Octavio's treachery, not knowing that his very words anticipate the sinister thoughts of Butler himself [111]—

> I leaned myself on him
> As now I lean me on thy faithful shoulder.
> And in the very moment when, all love,
> All confidence, my bosom beats to his,
> He sees and takes the advantage, stabs the knife
> Slowly into my heart.

Schiller, in an often-quoted letter to Goethe,[112] has called the Thekla-Max episode poetically the most important part of *Wallenstein*. One cannot help feeling that in this remark the critic Schiller does injustice to Schiller the poet. Even without the contrast with the youthful enthusiasm and idealism of the two lovers who, being drawn into Wallenstein's ruin, are physically crushed, but triumph morally, the one figure of Wallenstein himself is the most superb poetical vindication of moral freedom. Wallenstein falls because he sacrifices his moral freedom. He sells his spiritual birthright, and he becomes a prey to circumstance. He is weighed down with matter. His intellectual and moral vision is clouded. His life becomes a wild, fantastic, maddening dream, and only the hand of Death can awaken him and restore him to liberty and reason.[113]

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[111] *Tod* III, 10; *l. c.* 289 f.

[112] Letter of Nov. 9, 1798; *Schillers Briefe* V, 459. Carlyle in his *Life of Schiller* takes a similar view. Among recent critics, Eugen Kühnemann, *D. Kantischen Studien Schillers u. d. Komposition d. Wallenstein*, most strongly emphasizes the moral importance of the Thekla-Max episode. Cf. also Wychgram's *Schiller*.

[113] That Schiller conceived of Wallenstein as purified by death, is

The same central idea which gave life to *Wallenstein*, we recognise as the chief motive power in the four noble dramas which in wonderfully quick succession followed this impressive picture of Napoleonic greatness and littleness. Every one of these dramas, from *Mary Stuart* to *William Tell*, deals with the conflict between matter and spirit; every one of them represents the struggle of man for a complete existence; every one of them holds before us a vision of moral freedom and harmony attained. They are, as it were, ideas that have become flesh. An inner fire seems to have kindled within them an existence of their own and to have separated them from the life of common reality. And if they are sometimes lacking in that instinctive sympathy with human nature as it is, which distinguishes all of Shakspere's and nearly all of Goethe's work, they compensate for this by their splendid enthusiasm for human nature as it ought to be. They are all illustrations of what Schiller himself said in the preface to *The Bride of Messina*.[114] "Art has for its object not merely to excite to a momentary dream of liberty; its aim is to make us truly free. And this it accomplishes by awakening, exercising, and perfecting in us the power of removing to an objective distance the world of the senses, which otherwise only burdens us as formless matter and presses us down with a brute influence; of transforming it into the free working of our spirit; and of thus acquiring a dominion over the material world by means of ideas."

Maria Stuart

In *Maria Stuart* the conflict between matter and spirit appears as the struggle, in a woman's soul, between earthly passion and self-sacrificing resignation.

The plot of this drama is determined by a double motive. Mary of Scotland has been called before the

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clear from the poem *Thekla eine Geisterstimme; Sämmtl. Schr.* XI, 373.

[114] *Ueber d. Gebr. d. Chors i. d. Trag.; Sämmtl. Schr.* XIV, 5.

tribunal of the English parliament, not for any real guilt of hers, but for what her enemies make out to be her guilt. Her real guilt is her past. She has lived in unbridled license. She has instigated or at least abetted the murder of her husband; she has forced the Scotch parliament to acquit the murderer; she has gone so far as to accept the murderer himself to her own bed and board. But it is not for this that she is on trial before the English parliament. She is on trial because Elizabeth wants to rid herself of a dreaded rival; and all the accusations of conspiracy and rebellion brought against her are empty pretexts, trumped up for the occasion. Politically Mortimer hits the truth when he says [115]:

> Your undoubted right
> To England's throne has been your only wrong.

Mary's condemnation is unquestionably a judicial murder, not the necessary consequence of her own actions. Her death does not stand in direct relation to her guilt.

Far from seeing with Hettner,[116] in this fact, a defect of Schiller's drama, we find in it one of its most subtle beauties. Mary Stuart tried and condemned for the murder of Darnley, would win from us no sympathy except that accorded to a repentant and suffering sinner; Mary Stuart tried and condemned for maintaining her right to the throne of her fathers, is surrounded with all the halo of martyrdom. And the very fact that this martyr is at the same time a sinner, that the ghost of the past, although apparently pacified, although seeming to abandon his claim to outward revenge, reappears in her own bosom and makes her martyrdom an expiation of early guilt, lends to her character and fate a note of genuinely tragic irony.

Here, then, as in *Wallenstein*, we have after all not so much a picture of man struggling with circumstance, as a

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[115] *Maria Stuart* I, 6; *Sämmtl. Schr.* XII, 422. Mellish's trsl.

[116] *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* III, 2, *p.* 298 ff.

picture of man struggling with himself. It is after all not Elizabeth nor Burleigh nor the English parliament that decide Mary's fate, but Mary herself. Although her death warrant has been pronounced before the first scene opens, although her main attitude throughout the drama is one of passive suffering, we are yet made to feel that it is her character and her actions which determine the whole course of events. And her inner purification, her gradual triumph over her own past, her final transfiguration at the approach of death, form the true essence and import of the tragedy.

Literature has few characters of a pathos so subdued and gentle, yet at the same time so deep and true, as Schiller's Mary Stuart. We see in her, as it were, the bursting forth of the soul out of the very depths of earthy passion and gloom.

In the beginning of the drama, in spite of her personal charm and her queenly bearing, there is something stifled, something unfree about her. She accepts the ignominy and the trials of her imprisonment as a just retribution for her own transgressions, but in a frame of mind more akin to the dumb hopelessness of one pursued by inexorable fate than to the joyous resignation of a believer. And her feelings about her own past betray dread of revenge rather than true repentance.[117]

> Well I know him—
> It is the bleeding Darnley's royal shade,
> Rising in anger from his darksome grave:
> And never will he make his peace with me
> Until the measure of my woes be full.

Nor has she ceased to be essentially of the world. She implicitly encourages the ambitious desires of Leicester, she enters into the daring plans of Mortimer for her delivery, she does not dream of renouncing a tithe of her royal claims and privileges. It is not until the catastrophe of the third act that she looks Death clearly in the face.

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[117] *Maria Stuart* I, 4; *l. c.* 411 f.

With a wonderful insight into the essence of tragic nemesis, Schiller makes the messenger of doom appear in the disguise of a new hope of life. Elizabeth has been prevailed upon to grant the prisoner an interview, not from any feeling of mercy, but because she thinks that this interview will give her a chance for a personal humiliation of her hated rival. To Mary it comes with the violent shock of a sudden fulfilment of hopes long secretly cherished but never fully realized. The result is that when the meeting takes place she is hardly able to maintain her self-control. She had expected to see a woman to whose heart she might appeal; and she finds a haughty and implacable enemy. In vain does she humble herself before her, in vain does she remind her of the vicissitudes of earthly things, in vain does she plead for her own life and freedom. The only answer to all this is an arrogant smile and self-sufficient scorn. And now, with that grand self-forgetfulness which is the heritage of heroic natures, she flings all moderation to the winds, she bursts forth into an outcry of passion and rage, and, knowing that by doing so she cuts the thread which holds the sword suspended over her own head, she tears the mask of virtue and legitimacy from the face of her hypocritical adversary.[118]

> What have you done? She has gone hence in wrath!
> All hope is over now!—

exclaims the frightened Hannah after Elizabeth's sudden departure; and Mary answers exultantly:

> Gone hence in wrath!
> She carries death within her breast! I know it.
> Now I am happy, Hannah! and, at last,
> After whole years of sorrow and abasement,
> One moment of victorious revenge!
> A weight falls off my heart, a weight of mountains;
> I plunged the steel in my oppressor's breast!

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[118] *Maria Stuart* III, 5; *l. c.* 502 f.

From this time on she is prepared for death. All the sweetness, gentleness, and greatness of her nature seems to have been brought to the surface through this violent setting free of her innermost feelings. She is a queen again; she takes leave in the most touching manner from her attendants, giving to every one a word of cheer and kind remembrance; she forgives her enemies; she has a tender look even for the treacherous Leicester; she renounces all earthly desires; she thanks God for granting her to atone through an undeserved death for the transgressions of her youth; and she finds in the Holy Communion the assurance that her transfigured spirit will forever be joined with God. Thus her death, like that of a religious martyr, ceases to be a passive suffering, it becomes an act of free will, a triumph of the soul over bodily limitation.

It is not surprising that a woman, and a woman of such instinctive feeling for the truly fine as Mme. de Staël, should have called [119] *Maria Stuart* the most touching and the most harmonious of all German tragedies.

None of Schiller's dramas has met with so much adverse criticism as *The Maid of Orleans*. Vilmar deplores [120] its lack of sincere religious feeling; Scherer [121] thinks it operatic; Julian Schmidt[122] objects to the miraculous which forms an element of its plot; Hettner[123] considers it a striking illustration of what he calls the baneful influence exerted upon Schiller by the fatalistic views of Attic tragedy. Although most of these criticisms are not entirely without foundation, it yet remains true that of all of Schiller's dramatic characters

Die Jungfrau von Orleans.

[119] *De l'Allemagne* II, 18. [120] *Gesch. d. d. Nationallitt. p.* 428.

[121] *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 602. [122] *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* IV, 222.

[123] *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* III, 2, *p.* 302 ff.—Gervinus, *Gesch. d. d. Dichtg* V, 564, speaks of the "half hypnotic heroine" as "eine leidige Aufgabe." Similarly H. H. Boyesen in his *Goethe and Schiller*. More sympathetic is G. A. Heinrich, in his *Histoire de la Littérature Allemande* III.

none is a more perfect poetic symbol of his noblest aspirations than this God-inspired maiden who in the conflict between a divinely ordained mission and the instincts of her own human heart falls, suffers, regains herself, and is finally glorified. And those who blame the poet for not having represented Jeanne d'Arc as the ignorant peasant girl which she probably was, or as the spiritualistic fanatic whom Bastien le Page's painting so wonderfully portrays simply prove thereby their own incapacity or unwillingness, to enter into the true spirit of Schiller's creation.[124]

Die Jungfrau von Orleans, as Baumgart [125] has well expressed it, is the tragedy of moral idealism. No ideal achievement has ever been attained for which its author was not made to suffer. Whatever the cause:—be it the indifference of the masses, or the estrangement from those dearest to his heart ; be it open hostility and persecution by the prejudiced and the unbelievers, or the agony of self-reproach and misgiving in his own worthiness ; or be it the separation from the ordinary, instinctive life of mankind which is demanded of those who live in the spirit—the path of the idealist is bound to be companionless and lonely. All these causes work together to determine the fate of Schiller's Johanna. She grows up a dutiful daughter and a loving sister, yet at heart a stranger to her own kin, shy, wrapt up in herself, a solitary rambler in forest and glen. The townsfolk gossip about her vagaries; her father suspects her of communion with evil spirits ; only Raimond, her lover, though yearning in vain for a response to his feelings, divines in her a prophetess.[126]

From the deep vale, with silent wonder, oft
I mark her, when, upon a lofty hill

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[124] This is especially true of the peremptory criticism indulged in by Nevinson, *Life of Schiller p.* 160.

[125] *Euphorion* I, 120.

[126] *Jungfr. v. Orl., Prol.* 2 ; *Sämmtl. Schr.* XIII, 174 f. Miss Swanwick's trsl.

Surrounded by her flock, erect she stands
With noble port, and bends her earnest gaze
Down on the small domains of earth. To me
She looketh then as if from other times
She came, foreboding things of import high.

Now there comes to her a divine call. She is to raise the banner of the Bourbons trampled in the dust, she is to bring succour to beleaguered Orleans, to conduct the king to his coronation in Rheims cathedral, to free the soil of France from the detested English. But for herself she is to renounce all tender hopes and womanly instincts.[127]

Thou in rude armour must thy limbs invest,
A plate of steel upon thy bosom wear;
Vain earthly love may never stir thy breast,
Nor passion's sinful glow be kindled there.
Ne'er with the bride-wreath shall thy locks be dress'd,
Nor on thy bosom bloom an infant fair;
But war's triumphant glory shall be thine,
Thy martial fame all women's shall outshine.

She follows the call, the shepherdess becomes a Valkyrie. Her appearance inspires the army with new courage. Victory after victory marks her path, the court and the church vie with each other in extolling her services, France hails her as her saviour. But as before in her humility, so now in her greatness she is lonely. The feeble-hearted king and his sentimental mistress, the venerable but impersonal archbishop, the gallant but worldly-minded knights who make up the royal retinue—they all follow her lead, they are all carried away by her, but they are far from understanding her, they cannot enter into the mystery of her mission. And now she sees a pair of eyes which seem to look into her heart, which seem to bespeak an inner kinship with her own being, and she sees them at the very moment when she is about to strike a blow which would close these eyes for ever,—is it a wonder that the sword should become powerless

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[127] *Jungfr. v. Orl.*, Prol. 4; *l. c.* 188.

in her hand, that the long-suppressed instinct for human companionship, that the woman's impulse of surrender to the beloved man, should awake in her with flashlike suddenness?

She has broken her vow, she has opened her heart to love. At the very height of her glory, in the midst of the coronation festivities at Rheims, at the goal of her warlike career, she suffers the anguish of a guilty conscience.[128]

> What! I permit a human form
> To haunt my bosom's sacred cell?
> And there, where heavenly radiance shone,
> Doth earthly love presume to dwell?
> The saviour of my country, I,
> The warrior of God most high,
> Burn for my country's foeman? Dare I name
> Heaven's holy light, nor feel o'erwhelm'd with shame?

While she is thus despairing of her own worthiness and in vain is trying to flee away from herself, she suddenly sees in the midst of the jubilant multitude the sad and solemn face of her father. The very triumphs and honours of his daughter have convinced him more firmly than ever that she is in alliance with the evil one. He has come to redeem her soul, even though her mortal part should die. In the name of the Trinity, in the presence of those who have witnessed her miraculous career, he challenges her to answer him[129]:

> Belong'st thou to the pure and holy ones?

And Johanna remains silent.

From here on begins her inner purification. The maid of Orleans has now become the witch of Orleans, scorned and detested by the very people whom she saved from destruction. Homeless and friendless, except for the tender companionship of the faithful Raimond, she wanders about in misery and need until she falls into the hands of the English. But like Wallenstein and Mary Stuart she, also,

[128] *Jungfr. v. Orl.* IV, 1; *l. c.* 284. [129] *Ib.* IV, 11; *l. c.* 305.

regains through this very trial the lost harmony with herself. She overcomes the sinful inclinations for the enemy of her country; she rises to a sublime trust in divine dispensation; she reaches that state of absolute certainty of herself which, we remember,[130] was Schiller's definition of a beautiful soul: her moral feeling "has taken hold of her instinct to such a degree that it may commit the guidance of the will to the instinct without running the risk of conflicting with its decisions." She has again what she had in the beginning: undivided feeling, unreflective impulse; and she has it in a much deeper sense than ever before, not as a mere natural gift, but as a moral acquisition. And now there comes back to her the miraculous power over matter which she had lost when she lost faith in herself. She breaks the chains into which the English have thrown her, she rushes upon the battlefield, she seals the triumph of her country's cause by a glorious death.

Indeed, he who does not feel that in this character, in spite of its mediæval and mythical setting, Schiller has embodied ideas which affect the highest moral problems of our own modern life—for him Schiller has not written.[131]

In neither of the two weighty dramas which stand at the end of Schiller's career, *Die Braut von Messina* and *Wilhelm Tell*, is there a character of such all-absorbing and central interest as are Wallenstein, Mary Stuart, and the shepherdess of Dom Remi. They both show us masses in action, the former a royal house battling with fate, the latter a peasant people vindicating its ancient freedom.

Die Braut von Messina.

No better illustration of the inadequacy of merely formal criticism can be imagined than Hettner's characterization[132] of *The Bride of Messina* as "a philological study after the antique, artificial and bookish." So indeed it may appear to the learned critic whose natural feeling has been blurred through excessive cultiva-

[130] Cf. *supra p.* 370. [131] Cf. Bellermann *l. c.* II, 287.
[132] *L. c.* III, 2, *p.* 319.

tion of his literary sense. But what does the unsophisticated public care whether in this drama Schiller has imitated the Sophoclean *Œdipus* successfully or not? whether the principal characters act and speak in a manner suited to their mediæval surroundings or rather in the manner of Greek heroes? whether it was wise to have the moral background of the drama consist in a mixture of various religious beliefs? whether the introduction of a chorus [133] was a happy innovation or not? and whether this chorus, divided as it is and taking part for and against the contesting protagonists, fulfils the same task which the chorus of the Athenian tragedy fulfils? What is all this to the spectator? He sees gigantic Fate striding over the stage; he sees a wild, tyrannical race, burdened with ancestral guilt, turning against its own flesh and blood; both by the attitude of the leading characters and through the prophetic mouth of the chorus which surrounds the drama " like a living wall, separating it from common reality and guarding its poetic freedom," [134] he is made to feel that the self-destruction of this race is nothing accidental, that it is a divine visitation, a judgment of eternal justice pronounced against usurpation and lawlessness, that it means the birth of a new spiritual order out of doom and death;—and he leaves the theatre overpowered by the sense of having witnessed a sublime revelation of inspired genius, he feels what Goethe felt after the first performance in Weimar [135]: that through this tragedy the stage has received a higher consecration.

And finally *Tell.* Here, too, it is easy to raise objections

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[133] Scherer, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 608, shows in a striking manner that the elements of a chorus are to be found in all of Schiller's dramas.

[134] Schiller's own words, *Ueber d. Gebr. d. Chors ; Sämmtl. Schr.* XIV, 7.—Cf. W. Bormann, *Schiller als Dichter d. Braut v. Messina ; Akad. Blätter* 1884 *p.* 672 ff.

[135] Cf. Schiller's letter to Körner of March 28, 1803 ; *Schillers Briefwechsel mit Körner* ed. Goedeke II, 438.

of an æsthetic nature. One might point out that Goethe was guided by a true poetic instinct when he thought the Tell legend with its naïve, Herodotean simplicity adapted to epic rather than dramatic treatment.[136] One might dwell on the apparent lack of unity in Schiller's drama, the division of the plot into three separate actions: the Rütli episode, the Tell episode, and the Bertha-Rudenz episode. One might wish that some nobler way had been found for Tell to strike his blow against Gessler than from out of an ambush, although one would hardly be satisfied with the summary proceeding proposed by Börne and by Prince Bismarck[137]—namely, an open assault upon the tyrant on the village green of Altorf immediately following Gessler's savage attack against Tell's paternal feeling. One might regret that the introduction, in the last act, of an entirely new and unexpected motive—the assassination of the emperor by Parricida—has the effect of an anticlimax. But who would not rather silence these and similar objections, and give himself up with undivided heart to reverent delight in this immortal apotheosis of lawful freedom?

Wilhelm Tell.

It seems as though in this last great work of Schiller's, written while the shadow of death was upon him, the full glory not only of his own life, but of this whole era of intellectual revolution and reconstruction was bursting forth once more with concentrated radiance. Rousseau's republicanism and individualism; the moral law of Kant; Her-

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[136] Cf. Eckermann, *Gespr. m. Goethe* III, 116 f.

[137] "Natürlicher und nobler wäre es nach meinen Begriffen gewesen, wenn er statt auf den Jungen abzudrücken, den doch der beste Schütze statt des Apfels treffen konnte, wenn er da lieber gleich den Landvogt erschossen hätte. Das wäre gerechter Zorn über eine grausame Zumutung gewesen. Das Verstecken und Auflauern gefällt mir nicht, das passt sich nicht für Helden, nicht einmal für Franctireurs" —a remark of Bismarck's of Oct. 25, 1870, quoted after Busch by Bellermann *l. c.* II, 449. Cf. Börne, *Ueber d. Charakter d. Wilh. Tell*; *Ges. Schr.* (1862) IV, 318.

der's, Goethe's, and Schiller's ideal of culture,—they all have entered into this poem as constituent elements. But the same process of transformation which again and again we noticed as the leading tendency of this whole epoch we find typified in this poem also. The republicanism preached here is not the anarchic republicanism of the French Revolution, it is the public-spirited devotion to the common weal practised by men rooted in common tradition and belief. The individualism held out here is not the selfish individualism of the Storm-and-Stress period, it is the self-mastery of individuals conscious of being representatives of a whole people. The moral culture exhibited here is not the result of a conscious struggle with lower passions, it is the instinctive culture of aristocratic characters—for every one of these Swiss farmers appears as a born aristocrat—: it is, as it were, an anticipation of that highest state of human development hoped for by Schiller, where culture and nature will have become identical.

> The land is ours; it is our own creation!
> By our own labour those old gloomy forests,
> That once were lairs for wolves and bears, were felled,
> To make space for our homesteads; and the brood
> Of the old dragons that among the swamps
> Lurked, or, with venom swollen, issued forth
> For prey, were all destroyed; the dense, gray fogs
> That hung o'er fenny pastures were dispersed;
> The rocks were rent asunder; over chasms
> Were flung these bridges, to make safe the way
> For passengers; ay, by a thousand claims,
> The land is ours for ever!—Shall we bear it
> That he, the creature of a foreign lord,
> Shall here insult us on our own free soil?
> Is there no help for us? Must we bear this?—
> No!—there's a limit to the tyrant's power.
> When men, oppressed, can find no aid on earth,
> To rid them of their burden, then they rise;
> The people rise; they stretch their hands to heaven,
> And thence fetch down their old, eternal rights;

Their rights, all—like the everlasting lights
There shining in the heavens—unchangeable,
Imperishable as the stars themselves!—
Then nature's own primeval rule returns;
Man stands in battle, ready for the foe.
'Tis our last means; but when all others fail,
We draw the sword!—The best of all life's boons
We will defend!—In front of this our land
And of our wives and children, here we stand!

Here,[138] it seems, there speaks not an individual. Here is heard the outcry of a whole century battling for the restitution of popular freedom and lawful government. And with it there mingle the voices of other ages and other countries, the voices of the old Germanic freeholders, of mediæval burgherdom, of Luther, of Hampden, and of the minute-men of Lexington.

The great classic writers as public men.

No more futile accusation has ever been raised than the assertion not infrequent in critical estimates of the classic period of German literature, that the great German thinkers and poets were lacking in patriotism, that they were one-sided cosmopolitans and individualists, that they were forgetful of their public tasks and obligations. All that has been said on the foregoing pages would have been said in vain, if it had not imbued the reader with the conviction that the very reverse of these charges is true. At a time when the last remnants of the old Empire were being brushed away in the shameful treaties of Basel (1795) and Pressburg (1805); when the military honour of the nation was being trampled into the mud on the battlefields of Ulm and Austerlitz (1804); when German princes and statesmen were to be seen in the anterooms of French generals haggling for little private advantages in the midst of the universal ruin;—at this time the true representatives of public life in Germany were the men whose

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[138] Words of Stauffacher in the Rütli scene, *Tell* II, 2; *Sämmtl. Schr.* XIV, 328.

works we have been considering. They were the true upholders of national honour; they were the true leaders from the exaggerated individualism of the eighteenth to the collectivism of the nineteenth century; they are the true founders of German unity. For they have created the soul which in our own day on the bloody fields of Gravelotte and Sedan has at last wrought for itself a body.

Goethe as a prophet of national greatness.

It seems fitting to close this chapter by recalling a remark of Goethe's which shows how deeply he felt the service demanded from the literature of his time and how earnestly he strove to fulfil this service himself.

"Do not believe, I pray you," he said in a conversation with Professor Luden in 1813,[139] "that I am indifferent to the great ideas of freedom, nationality, country. No! These ideas are in us; they are a part of our being and nobody can divest himself of them. Germany I have warmly at heart. I have often felt a bitter grief at the thought of the German people which is so noble individually and so wretched as a whole. A comparison of the German people with other nations gives us painful feelings, which I try to overcome by all possible means; and in science and art I have found the wings which lift me above them; for science and art belong to the world, and the barriers of nationality vanish before them. But the comfort which they afford is after all only a miserable comfort, and does not make up for the proud consciousness of belonging to a nation strong, respected, and feared. In a like manner, I am comforted by the thought of Germany's future; I cling to this belief as firmly as you. Yes, the German people has a future. The destiny of the Germans is not yet fulfilled. But the time, the right time, no human eye can foresee, nor can human power hasten it on. To us individuals, meanwhile, is it given, to every one according to his talents, his inclinations, and his position, to increase, to strengthen, and to spread national culture. Not only downward, but above all upward; in order that in this respect at least Germany may be ahead of other nations, and that the national spirit, instead of being stifled and discouraged, may be kept alive and hopeful and ready to rise in all its might when the day of glory dawns."

[139] *Goethes Gespräche* ed. W. von Biedermann III, 103 ff.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ERA OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND THE GROWTH OF THE COLLECTIVISTIC IDEAL.

(From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Revolution of 1848.)

THE creed of the nineteenth century is collectivism. We have seen that this creed was begotten in the eighteenth century. We have followed its successive stages of growth, in Winckelmann's conception of Greek art as an outgrowth of Greek life; in Lessing's view of a continuous development of religious ideas throughout the ages; in Herder's vision of the organic unity of all mankind; in Kant's exaltation of the moral law; in Goethe's and Schiller's ideal of a perfect, all-embracing personality. But if collectivism was begotten in the eighteenth century, it was born only in the nineteenth. Only in this century has it ripened into a principle of its own, affecting national life at large, revolutionizing science, art, religion, politics, changing the mental, moral, and social aspect of all Europe.

Collectivism the chief tendency of the nineteenth century.

The reorganization of political life on a national instead of a dynastic basis; the introduction of universal military service and of universal suffrage; the new place given to the state as the centre of all individual endeavour; the transition in the industries from the workshop of the small independent craftsman to the factory system of corporations employing and controlling thousands of workmen, and thence to the supplanting of

Politically, socially, intellectually.

these corporations by the state; the enormous increase in the means of transportation and communication and the corresponding increase of an international *consensus:*—these are the leading facts in the political and social history of Europe in the nineteenth century. An equally radical and momentous change is seen in the intellectual and emotional atmosphere of the time. In science, both mental and physical, a steadily widening influence exercised by the idea of organic evolution, whether this idea be applied by a Grimm, Hegel, Ranke, Alexander von Humboldt, Comte, Marx, Darwin, or Spencer; in the religious life, a development from the contemplative analysis of a man like Schleiermacher to the constructive criticism of a Ferdinand Baur and a David Friedrich Strauss and the practical Christianity of a Lamennais or a Spurgeon; in literature and art, a transition from the aristocratic wilfulness of a Byron to the socialistic ecstasy of a Victor Hugo, from the careful adherence to line and to the individual figure shown in painters like Ingres or Cornelius to the broad treatment of masses in which modern Realism is revelling, from the worship of melody and the human voice in Haydn and Mozart to the worship of power and orchestral compactness in Beethoven and Richard Wagner.

What is all this but the manifestation of one great irresistible movement, a movement which, we have seen, was ideally anticipated by the great German thinkers and poets of the eighteenth century, which in our own day has entered upon the period of its highest practical influence, and which is destined to affect most profoundly the future not only of Europe, but of the whole civilized world—the movement from individualism to collectivism?

Its manifestation in the Romantic movement.

It will be the purpose of the present chapter to trace the beginnings of this development as seen in German thought, to watch the last efforts and the final extinction of eighteenth-century individualism, to follow the first steps of nineteenth-century collectivism; in

other words, to sketch the various phases of Romantic literature.

Phases of Romanticism.

Romanticism—a most awkward and inadequate name for a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement of a highly composite character and most diversified ramifications—coincided, in point of time, with the deepest degradation of the German people under the Napoleonic rule, the formal dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, the intellectual and moral regeneration of the Prussian state, the rising of the people against the foreign oppressor, the wars of liberation, Napoleon's downfall, the attempted re-establishment of a German federation on a purely dynastic basis, the political and religious reaction of the Holy Alliance, and the beginnings of the liberal struggle for constitutional government.[1]

The mere enumeration of these leading dates suffices to illustrate the fact that the Romantic movement was born and developed in an epoch of most extraordinary transformations of the public mind. In the beginning a complete breakdown of the old social order, a shattering of the very foundations of national existence; then a general revival of common traditions and common ideals; next a mighty outburst of popular enthusiasm and heroism in a great effort to vindicate national independence and to restore

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[1] The time limits of the Romantic movement as given here may seem arbitrary. Some will probably prefer to draw the line with the end of the first decade of the century, thus limiting the Romantic period to the reign of the so-called Romantic School. Others will ask why, if Romanticism is understood in a wider sense, men like Scheffel, Wagner, and other modern Romanticists should have been excluded from this chapter. No one, however, will fail to see the unity of the whole literary period from 1800 to the Revolution of 1848. And the term Romanticism is used here only as describing this unity of intellectual tendencies during the time mentioned. I cannot refrain from saying in this connection that the formation of an international league for the suppression of the terms both Romanticism and Classicism would seem to me a truly philanthropic undertaking.

national unity. Only too soon, however, there follows on the part of the governments an attempt to rob the people of the well-earned fruits of their self-sacrificing patriotism, and on the part of the people a relapse into the old wavering between theoretical radicalism and practical submissiveness. Again, as in the time of the Reformation, a most precious moment for the triumph of democracy is irretrievably lost; again a short May-day of noblest aspirations and highest hopes is succeeded by long years of oppression and lethargy; again the seed of the future is left to ripen slowly in the thoughts of a few isolated men. Here we have, in outline, the history not only of German politics from 1800 to 1848, but also of German Romanticism in its erratic course from entire moral disintegration, through a brief but glorious epoch of reconstructive efforts, to a dead, reactionary quietism, which would seem altogether hopeless, if it did not after all contain in itself the fundamental elements of the new national life that had been born in the popular uprising against Napoleon.

I. The Transition from Classicism to Romanticism: Jean Paul.

Jean Paul's sense of the infinite.

The typical representative of German life at the beginning of the century was a writer whose true greatness it is almost impossible for us of the present day fully to grasp: Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825). In him, it seemed, the ideal of an harmonious, all-embracing individuality, which we found to be the main-spring of classic German literature, had taken bodily form and come to walk among men. There probably never was a poet who felt more deeply and with more personal ardour than Jean Paul the unity of all life. His heart did indeed embrace the universe. His loving eye lingered with the same calm serenity upon the smallest and the greatest. To him the dewdrop in truth reflected the world, because it *was* to him a world in itself. His life was filled with that profound and joyous

awe which springs from a strong and abiding sense of the infinite, and which is "man's best part."[2] His creations are tuned, as it were, to that wonderful rhapsody on Death which De Quincey has made familiar to English ears[3]:

"Once in dreams I saw a human being of heavenly intellectual faculties, and his aspirations were heavenly; but he was chained (methought) eternally to earth. The immortal old man had five great wounds in his happiness—five worms that gnawed for ever at his heart. He was unhappy in springtime, because that is a season of hope, and rich with phantoms of far happier days than any which this aceldama of earth can realize. He was unhappy at the sound of music, which dilates the heart of man into its whole capacity for the infinite, and he cried aloud: 'Away, away! Thou speakest of things which throughout my endless life I have found not, and shall not find!' He was unhappy at the remembrance of earthly affections and dissevered hearts: for love is a plant which may bud in this life, but it must flower in another. He was unhappy under the glorious spectacle of the starry host, and cried out for ever in his heart: 'So then I am parted from you to all eternity by an impassable abyss; the great universe of suns is above, below, and round about me, but I am chained to a little ball of dust and ashes.' He was unhappy before the great ideas of virtue, of truth, and of God; because he knew how feeble are the approximations to them which a son of earth can make.—But this was a dream. God be thanked that in reality there is no such craving and asking eye directed upwards to heaven to which Death will not one day bring an answer!"

It was this ever-present consciousness of being surrounded by living mysteries, this Schellingian belief in the identity of matter and spirit, this rapturous feeling of oneness with the soul of the universe, which have made Jean Paul one of the great nature-painters of the world.

His landscapes impress us as though the fantastic colours

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[2] *Faust* II, 1660.—Cf. Jean Paul's *Dämmerungen; Werke* Hempel XXV, 21: "Vor dem höchsten Auge muss das Kleinste wieder ein Grösstes und All sein, und die Unendlichkeit der Teilbarkeit ist eine des Wertes."

[3] Cf. Thomas De Quincey, *Essays on Philosophical Writers* (Boston 1856) I, 213.

of a Turner had mingled with some deep strain of Wagner's music. As in a trance, our sight, our hearing, our feeling become blended. We seem to see before us not individual trees, rocks, meadows, but one great elemental being, breathing in it all, looking at us from the dark of the forest, pressing upon us with the roar of the storm-wind or the song of the nightingale, gently smiling at us from the ripple of the waves.

Jean Paul as a landscape-painter.

"A night without equal!"—this is his description of a moon-lit night on the Bay of Naples [4]—"The stars alone of themselves illuminated the earth, and the milky way was silvery. An avenue of poplar-trees, intertwined with vine-blossoms, led to the magnificent city. Everywhere we heard people, talking near by, singing in the distance. Out of dark chestnut woods, on moon-lit hills, the nightingales called one another. A poor sleeping maiden, whom we had taken in our coach, heard the melodies even down into her dream, and sang after them, and then, when she waked herself therewith, looked round bewildered and with a sweet smile, with the whole melody and the dream still in her bosom. On a slender two-wheeled carriage, a wagoner, standing on the pole and singing, rolled merrily by. Women were already bearing in the cool of the hour great baskets full of flowers into the city; in the distance, as we passed along, whole paradises of flower-cups sent up their fragrance; and the heart and the bosom drank in at once the love-draught of the sweet air. The moon had risen bright as a sun into the high heaven, and the horizon was gilded with stars; and in the whole cloudless sky stood the dusky cloud-column of Vesuvius, alone, in the east. Far into the night, after two o'clock, we rolled in and through the long city of splendour, wherein the living day still bloomed on. Gay people filled the streets; the balconies sent each other songs; on the roofs bloomed flowers and trees between lamps, and the little bells of the hours prolonged the day; and the moon seemed to give warmth. Only now and then a man lay sleeping between the colonnades, as if he were taking his noon siesta. The sea slept, the earth seemed awake. In the fleeting glimmer (the moon was already sinking towards Posilippo) I looked up over this divine frontier city of the world of waters, over this rising mountain of palaces, to where the lofty Castle of St. Elmo looks,

[4] *Titan*, *109 Zykel*; *Werke* XVIII, 513 ff. Brook's trsl.

white, out of a green bower. With two arms the earth embraced the lovely sea; on her right, on Posilippo, she bore blooming vine-hills far out into the waves, and on the left she held cities, and spanned round its waters and its ships, and drew them to her breast. Like a Sphinx lay the jagged Capri darkly on the horizon in the water, and guarded the gates of the bay. Behind the city the volcano smoked in the ether, and at times sparks played between the stars.

"Now the moon sank down behind the elms of Posilippo,—the city grew dark,—the din of the night died away,—fishermen disembarked, put out their torches, and laid themselves down on the bank,—the earth seemed to sink to sleep, but the sea woke up. A wind from the coast of Sorrento ruffled the still waves; more brightly gleamed Sorrento's sickle with the reflection at once of the moon and of morning, like silver meadows; the smoke-column of Vesuvius had blown away, and from the fire-mountain streamed a long, clear morning-redness over the coasts as over a strange world."

The same depth of feeling, the same universality of view, the same divinatory insight into the hidden life, which we find in Jean Paul's pictures of nature characterize him as a genre-painter and as a humorist.

As a genre-painter.

In such figures as Wuz, as Quintus Fixlein, as Siebenkäs and his friend Leibgeber, as Dr. Katzenberger and others, German life, domestic and civil, of a hundred years ago stands before us with all its charms and all its foibles, its innocence and its absurdity, its pedantry and its freedom, its awkwardness and its originality, its outer limitations and its inner wealth. No better illustration could be imagined than these characters afford of what Goethe said in 1808 to Chancellor von Müller[5]: "Germany as a whole is nothing, the individual German is everything." They are—to adopt a phrase of Jean Paul himself—if not worlds, at least continents by themselves. They might almost reconcile us to the political misery of the time which made

[5] *Goethes Unterhaltungen m. d. Kanzler v. Müller* ed. Burkhardt *p.* 3.—For Lichtenberg (d. 1799) and Hippel (d. 1796) Jean Paul's predecessors in the humorous analysis of exceptional characters cf. *DNL.* CXLI.

it possible for such perfect types of philistine idealism—may the paradox be pardoned—to develop.

All these people would be hopelessly lost in our own time. Most of them recoil from contact with society; there is something blind in their existence; they live, as it were, underground.[6] And even those who, like Katzenberger, walk upright and with a firm step, are totally unable to adapt themselves to their terrestrial surroundings. Their idealism is often a caricature of idealism. Poor Wuz, who has no money to buy books, manages to acquire a "library" by collecting titles of books and supplying the text to them from his own brain. Fixlein aspires to the distinction of publishing a *catalogue raisonné* of all the misprints to be found in German authors. Siebenkäs by his exclusive devotion to intellectual pursuits is led to a most outrageous violation of his duties toward his loving but unintellectual wife. Katzenberger carries his enthusiasm for the study of abortions to such an extent that he almost feels it as a descent into the commonplace when his wife gives birth to a daughter of an entirely normal constitution. And yet what an unbroken and inwardly sound existence is revealed in these characters! What an unfailing instinct they have for the true values of life, however awkwardly it may express itself! In all their childishness and perverseness, how much of unspent force they are harbouring! Young Wuz is having a sorry time at school: hard work, no relaxation, and the harshest treatment. But that does not interfere with his good-humour.[7] "All day long he rejoiced about something or in prospect of something. 'Before getting up,' he said, 'I enjoy thinking of breakfast, all the morning of dinner,

[6] The hero of *Die unsichtbare Loge* (*Werke* I. II) does indeed spend the larger part of his childhood in a subterraneous cavern. A striking illustration of the fact that the mysticism of Jean Paul's favourite characters was deeply rooted in the German life of that time is the autobiography of Jung-Stilling (d. 1817; cf. *DNL.* CXXXVII).

[7] *Leben des Schulmeisterleins Maria Wuz; Werke* II, 360.

all the afternoon of Vesperbrot, and in the evening of supper—and thus Mr. Wuz has always something pleasant to think about.'" Fixlein, with all his pedantry and sentimentalism, is at bottom a sterling character, a noble soul; and the wealth of grace and poetry spread out over his simple and uneventful career is only the reflex of the warmth and fulness of his inner life. In idyllic poetry or painting of modern times from Hebel to Auerbach, Knaus, and Defregger there are few pictures which in inner truthfulness and depth of character-drawing can be compared with the wedding of Fixlein and his beloved Thiennette.[8]

"At the sound of the morning prayer-bell, the bridegroom—for the din of preparation was disturbing his quiet orison—went out into the church-yard, which (as in many other places), together with the church, lay round his mansion like a court. Here, on the moist green, over whose closed flowers the church-yard wall was still spreading broad shadows, did his spirit cool itself from the warm dreams of earth. Here where the white flat gravestone of his teacher lay before him like the fallen-in door on the Janus Temple of life; here where the little shrunk metallic door on the grated cross of his father uttered to him the inscriptions of death, and the year when his parent departed, and all the admonitions and mementos, graven on the lead;—here, I say, his mood grew softer and more solemn; and he now lifted up by heart his morning prayer, which usually he read; and entreated God to bless him in his office, and to spare his mother's life and to look with favour and acceptance on the purpose of to-day.—Then over the graves he walked into his fenceless little flower-garden; and here, composed and confident in the divine keeping, he pressed the stalk of his tulips deeper into the mellow earth.

"But on returning to the house, he was met on all hands by the bell-ringing and the Janizary music of wedding-gladness;—the marriage-guests had all thrown off their night-caps, and were drinking diligently; there was a clattering, a cooking, a frizzling; tea services, coffee services, and warm-beer services were advancing in succession; and plates full of bride-cakes were going round like potter's frames or cistern-wheels. The schoolmaster, with three young lads, was heard rehearsing from his own house

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[8] *Leben des Quintus Fixlein;* Werke III, 128 ff. Carlyle's trsl.

an *Arioso*, with which, so soon as they were perfect, he purposed to surprise his clerical superior.—But now all the arms of the foaming joy-streams rushed into one, when the sky-queen besprinkled with blossoms, the bride, descended upon earth in her timid joy, full of quivering, humble love; when the bells began; when the procession set forth with the whole village round and before it; when the organ, the congregation, the officiating minister and the sparrows on the trees of the church-window, struck louder and louder their rolling peals on the drum of the jubilee festival. The heart of the singing bridegroom was like to leap from its place for joy, 'that on his bridal day it was all so respectable and grand.'—Not till the marriage-benediction could he pray a little.

"Still worse and louder grew the business during dinner, when pastry work and marchpane devices were brought forward; when glasses and slain fishes (laid under the napkins to frighten the guests) went round;—and when the guests rose, and themselves went round, and at length danced round: for they had instrumental music from the city.

"One minute handed over to the other the sugar-bowl and bottle-case of joy: the guests heard and saw less and less, and the villagers began to see and hear more and more, and towards night they penetrated like a wedge into the open door,—nay, two youths ventured even into the middle of the parsonage court, to mount a plank beam, and commence see-sawing.—Out of doors, the gleaming vapour of the departed sun was encircling the earth, the evening star was glittering over parsonage and church-yard; no one heeded it.

"About nine o'clock, when the marriage-guests had well-nigh forgotten the marriage-pair, and were drinking and dancing away for their own behoof; and when the bridegroom had in secret pressed to his joy-filled breast his bride and his mother,—he went to lock a slice of wedding-bread privily into a press, in the old superstitious belief that this residue would secure continuance of bread for their whole married life. As he returned, with greater love for the sole partner of his life, she herself met him with his mother to deliver him in private the bridal night-gown and bridal shirt, as is the ancient usage. Many a countenance grows pale in violent emotions, even of joy. Thiennette's wax face was bleaching still whiter under the sunbeams of happiness. O never fall, thou lily of heaven, and may four springs instead of four seasons open and shut thy flower-bells to the

sun!—All the arms of his soul, as he floated on the sea of joy, were quivering to clasp the soft warm heart of his beloved, to encircle it gently and fast, and draw it to his own."

From all that has been said it will have become apparent why Jean Paul seemed destined to be the legitimate heir of Classicism. With his deep sense of the grandeur of the universe, with his reverent delight in all existence, with his keen interest in human society as he saw it about him, with his marvellous power of microscopic observation, and with his all-harmonizing and unifying humour, he seemed to be the poet destined to give a new expression, and a more real one at that, to the ideal of perfect manhood which had inspired the work of Goethe and Schiller.

Jean Paul's mission as fulfiller of Classicism.

That this was indeed the vision hovering before Jean Paul's mind there can be no doubt. His three most important novels—*Hesperus* (1795), *Titan* (1800–1803), the *Flegeljahre* (1804–5)—seem like one sustained effort to evolve the complete man from the existing conditions of society; they are all variations of the *Wilhelm Meister* theme; they are a part of the universal eighteenth-century movement for the harmonious blending of all human faculties.

Never has there been a more striking proof of the futility of individual culture without the basis of a strong and healthy national life than Jean Paul's failure to become what he seemed by nature destined to be. Had he lived in an age of inspiring national tasks, had it been given to him to take part in a powerful popular movement, had he been forced into the wholesome discipline of public duties, he would have found that inner equilibrium which is the indispensable condition of true greatness in art as in everything else. As it was, the years of his best manhood fell in a time the whole ignominy of which is contained in the three words Basel, Jena, Rheinbund; and, what is worse, he lived, for the most part, in the

His failure to accomplish it.

stifling atmosphere of frivolous little courts, the political insignificance of which was on a level with their indifference to national honour. How could a man of Jean Paul's temper and genius, under such conditions, become anything but erratic and eccentric? How could he help being devoid of the moral soundness and vigour which is the fruit of individual talent exercised in the service of a common cause[9]? Even Goethe and Schiller were not entirely free from the foibles of an age which seemed to have made political impotence a permanent characteristic of the German people. By sheer force of character, by a steady adherence to what they had come to regard as the universally human, they at length rose superior to their age, and thus became the seed-bearers of future national greatness. Jean

[9] Jean Paul's personal character was a truly kaleidoscopic mixture of genuine feeling, true benevolence, high-flown sentimentality, fickleness, frivolity, and selfishness. His love affairs are the record of a Werther, a thrifty bourgeois, and a Don Juan combined. "Caroline," he writes in 1800 speaking of his engagement to a young lady of unusually fine parts both of intellect and heart, "has a sterner and more austere mind than mine is. All the better shall we supplement each other. By my side all that the future may bring is a matter of indifference to her. She now devotes herself as eagerly to housekeeping as formerly to botany and astronomy. I shall be sanctified through her; I see the guidance of Providence in my long circuitous road toward her." A few weeks afterwards he breaks the engagement, leaving the unfortunate girl in anguish and despair, while he himself revels in the ovations showered upon him by Berlin society, especially the feminine part of it. Of one of these Berlin admirers he writes: "We have now got to the stage of holding hands with occasional light pressures," and his philosophy of the future takes the following turn: "I must and shall marry a girl whose kith and kin will go into raptures over my stooping to her. For some time, however, I have included a dowry in my speculations; a wealthy countess or something of that sort, I often think, may get struck on you; and then you would invest in a saddle-horse." No wonder that with all his numberless relations to women Jean Paul has not produced a single love-song. Cf. P. Nerrlich, *Jean Paul p.* 332 ff. Julian Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. s. Lessings Tod*[5] II, 203 ff.

Paul, although apparently striving after the same ideal, remained what he was in the beginning, an extreme, nay, a morbid individualist. His real interest lay, not in the universal and the normal, but in the exceptional and the abnormal, in the capricious, in the diseased. And thus with all his wealth of feeling, with all his patriotic sentiment, with all his liberalism, with all his love of mankind, he was a destroyer rather than an upbuilder. Instead of the fulfiller of Classicism, he came to be the forerunner of Romanticism.

Jean Paul as forerunner of Romanticism.

It is indeed well-nigh impossible for the modern reader to find his way through the labyrinthine tangle of Jean Paul's imagination. These enchanted forests of wild adventure and mysterious chance, these dreary deserts of recondite learning, these gloomy caverns of mystic contemplation, these cataracts of untamed emotion,—how strange and bewildering it all is! And stranger still are the men and women whom we encounter in this exotic world. Here and there we are attracted by a picture of primitive innocence; now and then we look into an eye full of divine fire. We meet good-natured dreamers like Gottwalt in the *Flegeljahre* who, "if he were nailed to the cross, would try to get one of his hands free in order to shake the hand of the soldier who crucified him"[10]! We see gay children of the world like Gottwalt's brother Vult, strolling about with his flute, and chasing thought away with a song and a laugh. We see hyper-ideal beings like the Hindu philosopher Emanuel in *Hesperus*, the high-priest of vegetarianism and spiritualism, or the angelic Liane in *Titan*, whose life is a continual preparation for death, whose embrace suggests the folding of wings, instead of arms. We see virtuosos of sensibility such as Victor, the hero of *Hesperus*, who confesses of himself:

[10] Although it is the caustic Goldine who thus speaks of Walt, the characterization is no less true on that account.—*Hesperus*, *Werke* VII–X; *Titan*, *ib.* XV–XXIII; *Flegeljahre*, *ib.* XX–XXIII.

"Give me two days or one night, and I will fall in love with whomsoever you propose;" or Albano, the hero of *Titan*, who would rather be entirely unhappy than not entirely happy. We look into the abyss of natures at war with themselves, such as Schoppe, the cynic disciple of Fichte, who in his attempt to transcend Fichte, to find delivery from the Ego, to reach out into the Nothing, falls a victim to madness; or Roquairol, the "burnt-out prodigal of life, for whom there is no new pleasure and no new truth left and who has no old one entire and fresh," a veritable *fin de siècle* character to whom even suicide has sufficient attractiveness only in the form of a theatrical sensation. But where, in all this tropic exuberance of characters and situations, is there a simple, brave, clear-headed, self-possessed *man*, engaged in useful public activity (not merely a fictitious one like Albano's) and surrounded by a free and sturdy people? The complete absence in Jean Paul of such a conception as this was unquestionably less his fault than that of the time which made him what he was. Yet during these very years Schiller wrote his *Wallenstein* and *Wilhelm Tell*.

II. The Disintegration of Classicism.

We have now arrived at the true starting-point of Romanticism. German Romanticism, in its early stages, was a result of political atrophy combined with highest literary culture; it was a consequence of the abnormal condition in which at the beginning of the century the intellectual aristocracy of the nation found itself.

The social foundations of Romanticism.

Through the noble poets and thinkers of the older generation the educated classes of Germany had attained to such a degree of philosophic and artistic refinement, they had acquired such a wealth of common ideal possessions as only the few greatest epochs of history have seen. Naturally, this intenseness and universality of intellectual interest

served as a stimulus to an equally intense and equally universal desire for production. Genius, as has well been said,[10a] was in the air. But where should this genius turn? What part was there for it to play? What avenues of activity were open to it? What opportunity was there for it to influence the life of the people at large? Astonishing as it may seem, it is none the less true that there was no more room in Germany for genius now than in the time of Frederick the Great, except on the throne (where, however, it did not always show itself), and in the ideal realm of literature and art. Even now the way toward national reform and collective enterprise seemed to be hopelessly blocked. Even now the great intellectual leaders of the age were isolated individuals without any large and compact following; they were generals in command of an army in which the rank and file was made up of officers each of whom would rather act upon his own strategic notions than obey his superior's orders.

Early Romanticism a caricature of Classicism.

In other words, German classic literature, with all its magnificent achievements, lacked that firm foundation in popular tradition and belief which is the surest safeguard of an even and uninterrupted intellectual growth. And thus, at the very height of its development, it turned back, as it were, upon itself, and again gave way to that excessive and morbid craving for individual liberty from which, in the Storm-and-Stress movement, it had taken its start. Romanticism in its early form was a caricature of Classicism; it was individualism run mad.

Nowhere has this spirit of fantastic and wilful self-assertion manifested itself in a more striking manner than in the three novels in which three of the leading Romanticists formulated their capricious creed at the very time when Goethe and Schiller in *Wilhelm Meister* and *Wallenstein* exalted self-discipline and self-forgetfulness: Tieck's

[10a] Cf. J. Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy p.* 170 ff.

William Lovell (1795–96), Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde* (1799), Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1799–1800).

Tieck's William Lovell.

Tieck, in later years, in the preface to a second edition of *William Lovell*, claimed a positive moral and educational purpose for this work of his youth. "My youth," he says,[11] "fell in those times when not only in Germany, but in the greater part of the civilized world, the sense for the beautiful, the sublime, and the mysterious seemed to have sunk to sleep or to be dead. A shallow enlightenment, to which the divine appeared as an empty dream, ruled the day; indifference toward religion was called freedom of thought, indifference toward country, cosmopolitanism. Trivial popular observations had taken the place of philosophy, and a morbid examination of diseased mental states was heralded under the noble name of psychology. . . . In the struggle against these predominant views, I sought to win for myself a quiet place, where nature, art, and faith might again be cultivated; and this endeavour led me to hold up to the opposing party [the party of Enlightenment] a picture of their own confusion and spiritual wantonness which would in a measure justify my falling away from it." The degree of self-deception contained in these words is truly astonishing. It cannot, of course, be denied that the ideal of complete humanity which inspired the great poets and thinkers of the classic period was by a large part of their contemporaries misconstrued into a commonplace utilitarianism. Goethe and Schiller themselves, in the *Xenien* (1796), rose up in their might against the platitudes of this sort of rationalism. But after all, rationalism of the Nicolai or Kotzebue type was a comparatively harmless, though degenerate, variety of the true rationalism taught by the men of Weimar and Königsberg.

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[11] Tieck's *Schriften* (1828) VI, 3 ff.—For the following cf. R. Haym, *D. romant. Schule p.* 41 ff. G. Brandes, *D. romant. Schule in Deutschl. p.* 61 ff.

To Tieck and his friends it was left to pervert it into its opposite, the worship of the absurd.

Nobody who reads *William Lovell* without partisan bias can escape the impression that here we have the involuntary confessions of a mind revelling in the abnormal, given over to a sickly delight in the arbitrary rulings of fate, totally devoid of any sense of common moral obligations. Whatever Tieck may affirm to the contrary, it is not enlightenment, but his own distorted views of enlightenment, which he embodied in the hero of this novel; it is his own erratic self which we hear in the reflections of this talkative and capricious weakling whom an equally capricious though methodical scoundrel succeeds in turning into a complete profligate and criminal.

William, in the beginning, reminds us of Wieland's Agathon. He is a youth of the finest sensibility and the deepest feeling; he is secretly engaged to a pure and ethereal maiden; he believes in virtue, innocence, and the freedom of the will. He is, of course, an enthusiastic admirer of nature; with Rousseau, he believes in a former ideal state of mankind; with Schiller he scorns the pettiness of modern life compared with that of the Greeks.[12] "Ah, the golden age of the Muses has disappeared for ever! When gods full of tenderness were still walking on the earth, when Beauty and Grandeur clad in harmonious robes were still dancing hand in hand on gay meadows, when the Hours with golden key still opened Aurora's gate, and blessing Genii with horns of plenty hovered over a smiling world—ah! then the sublime and the beautiful had not yet been degraded to the pretty and the alluring." This sounds like an echo of Schiller's *The Gods of Greece.* The difference is that while Schiller in this sentimental longing for an imaginary state of ideal happiness found an incentive for a life-long devotion to serious and profound work, Tieck's

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[12] *William Lovell* II, 2; *Schr.* VI, 50.

hero becomes through it a victim of the first temptation that presents itself to him in the shape of a Parisian coquette.

As may be expected, his philosophy of life now takes a materialistic turn, thinly disguised by vague pantheistic phrases.[13] "I pity the fools who are for ever babbling about the depravity of the senses. Blind wretches, they offer sacrifices to an impotent deity, whose gifts cannot satisfy a human heart. They climb laboriously over barren rocks to find flowers, and heedlessly pass by blooming meadows. No, I have pledged myself to the service of a higher deity, before which all living nature bows, which unites in itself every feeling, which is rapture, love, everything—for which language has no word, the lips have no sound.—Only in the embraces of Louise have I come to know what love is, the memory of Amelia appears to me now in a dim, misty distance. I never loved her." Sickening as it is to see Faust's confession of faith thus degraded into an excuse for stooping to the charms of a heartless adventuress, this is only the preparation for things far worse. New temptations as well as occasional pangs of conscience convince William that he needs a firmer theoretical foundation for his wanton practice, and he finds this foundation in a caricature of Kantian transcendentalism. The language in which he formulates this pseudo-Kantianism is the language of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), stripped of its moral enthusiasm and perverted into fantastic sophistry. In directness and suggestiveness it leaves nothing to be desired.[14] "Do I not walk through this life as a somnambulist? All that I see is only a phantom of my inner vision. I am the fate which prevents the world from crumbling to pieces. The world is an empty desert in which I meet nothing but myself. All things exist only because I think them; virtue exists only because I think it. Everything submits to my caprice; every phenomenon, every act, I can call what it pleases

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[13] *William Lovell* II, 23; *l. c.* 95 f. [14] *Ib.* III, 23; *l. c.* 177 ff.

me. The world, animate and inanimate, is suspended by the chains which my mind controls. My whole life is a dream the manifold figures of which are formed according to my will. I am the one supreme law of all nature." The climax of this libertinism is reached when William learns that his connection with the angelic Amelia, whose memory in all his reckless dissipations had been the one pure spot of his soul, meets with the opposition of his father. Now he seems to have a justification for throwing her over entirely, now he can preach the emancipation of the flesh without restriction or reserve.[15] "In truth, lust is the great secret of our existence. Poetry, art, even religion, are lust in disguise. The works of the sculptor, the figures of the poets, the paintings before which devoutness kneels, are nothing but introductions to sensual enjoyment; every melody, every garment beautifully thrown, beckons us to that. All life is a wild tumultuous dance. Let my wanton spirit be borne aloft by a noble bacchantic rage that it never again may feel at home in the miserable trifles of the common world."

The revolting story of seduction, murder, and highway robbery, which as a practical illustration of these principles forms the closing chapter of Lovell's career, would be of little interest but for the fact that Lovell's views of life coincide, even at this stage, with those toward which Tieck himself and his friends were gradually drifting. They, like Lovell, began as followers of Rousseau, they as well as he passed in quick succession from an overwrought idealism to a fantastic sensualism and thence to open rebellion against any kind of moral discipline. And (as we shall see more clearly later) they as well as Lovell took refuge from this hollow libertinism in an equally hollow and utterly irrational belief in the supernatural and the miraculous. A few of William's utterances indicative of this final

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[15] *William Lovell* IV, 2 ; *l. c.* 212 f.

conversion of his may serve to complete the picture of his inner development.

"Our boldest thoughts," he says,[16] "our most wanton doubts, after having destroyed everything, after having swept through an immense desert depopulated by themselves, at last bow before a feeling which makes the wilderness bear fruit again. . . . This feeling overthrows doubt as well as certainty, it rests satisfied in itself; and the man who has arrived at this point returns to some form of belief, for belief and feeling are the same. Thus the most reckless freethinker at last becomes a worshipper of religion; yes, he may even become what is usually called a fanatic—a word misunderstood by most people who use it. And since there cannot exist in us a feeling which does not correspond to some kind of reality, this instinct for the miraculous, which is innate in us, probably means much more than people are commonly inclined to think. . . . Dreams are perhaps our highest philosophy. Perhaps we are to experience a great revelation which will accomplish at one stroke what reason must for ever fail to accomplish: a solution of all mysteries, within and without. Perhaps all illusion will vanish when we reach a height of vision which to the rest of mankind appears as the height of absurdity."

Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde.

If the downward career of William Lovell, with its inglorious ending in a duel forced upon him by an outraged rival, has at least something in it of a warning example, there is not even the shadow of a constructive purpose to be discovered in Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde* (1799). Here we have the open glorification of unblushing debauchery, the apotheosis of irresponsible caprice. The ideal of complete culture is here perverted into the ideal of absolute aimlessness. Individualism here unwittingly declares its own bankruptcy.

As a novel, *Lucinde* is far inferior even to *William Lovell.* The author's principles of composition may be inferred from his statement,[17] that "nothing would be more to the

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[16] *William Lovell* V, 8. 9. VI, 9; *l. c.* VI, 344 ff. VII, 18.

[17] *Lucinde* ed. of 1799 *p.* 13 f.—Cf. Haym *l. c.* 493 ff. Brandes *l. c.* 72 ff. H. H. Boyesen, *Essays on German Literature p.* 294 ff.

purpose of this book than that in writing it he should put aside what is called order and assert to the full his unquestioned right to a charming lawlessness." Whatever there is of a plot is contained in a single chapter entitled 'The Apprenticeship of Manliness,' which reads like a distorted catalogue of Wilhelm Meister's love affairs. The characters are either caricatures or shadows or both—from Julius, the philosophizing roué who spends his time [18] in "reflecting about the possibility of a permanent embrace," whose sole aim of life it seems to be [19] "not only to *have* enjoyment, but also to enjoy the enjoyment," through the long list of more or less ambiguous women who serve him as object lessons in this exalted study, to Lucinde herself, the embodiment of the Romantic ideal of womanhood.[20] "She, too, (like Julius), was one of those who live, not in the common world, but in a world of their own creation. She, too, with a bold resolution had cast off all social bonds and restrictions, and lived entirely free and independent."

Not as a work of fiction, but as a social programme, *Lucinde* is one of the remarkable books of the world's literature. Here more clearly than in any other literary production of the time we are able to measure the degree of intellectual and moral dissoluteness into which at the end of the eighteenth century the lack of a healthy national life had driven the most cultivated classes of Germany. Here the isolated individuals of the age of the Migrations seem to reappear, changed from the heroic dimensions of a Clovis or a Rosamond to the neatness and elegance of the authors and authoresses concerning whom Mme. de Staël felt constrained to say [21]: "Il faut l'avouer, les Allemands de nos jour n'ont pas ce que l'on peut appeler du caractère." Here, modern humanity, developed to its highest refinement and susceptibility, seems to sink back again into a

[18] *Lucinde p.* 79. [19] *Ib. p.* 9. [20] *Ib. p.* 192.
[21] *De l'Allemagne* III, 11.

state of moral barbarism. Here, the whole world seems to be transformed into one vast opportunity for self-indulgence.

Loathsome as it is, it is none the less instructive to observe the paroxysms of insanity (no other word is strong enough) into which the æsthetic libertinism of this book again and again breaks forth.

"In that immortal hour," thus begins the chapter entitled 'Elegy on Idleness,'[22] "when the Spirit moved me to proclaim the divine gospel of joy and love, I thus spoke to myself: 'O idleness, idleness! thou art the native element of innocence and poetry; in thee live and breathe the heavenly hosts; blessed the mortals who cherish thee, thou sacred gem, sole fragment of godlike being that is left to us from paradise.'—Like a sage of the Orient, I was completely lost in holy brooding and calm contemplation of the eternal substances, especially thine [Lucinde's] and mine. I saw thee and myself, a gentle sleep embracing us as we were embracing each other. With the utmost indignation I thought of the bad men who would fain take sleep out of life. Oh, they never slept and never lived themselves! Why are the gods gods if not because they consciously and purposely do nothing, because they understand this art and are masters in it? And oh, how the poets, the sages and saints are endeavouring to become like the gods in this respect! How they vie with each other in the praise of solitude, leisure, and a liberal carelessness and inactivity! And they are right, indeed; for everything good and beautiful is here already and maintains itself by its own strength. Why, then, this constant striving and pushing without rest and repose? Industry and utility are the angels of death who with flaming sword prevent man from his return to paradise. Through composure and gentleness only, in the sacred quietude of genuine passiveness, can we realize our whole self. The more beautiful the climate, the more truly passive man is. Only Italians know how to carry themselves, and Orientals only know how to recline. The right of idleness marks the distinction between the noble and the common, and is the true essence of aristocracy. To say it in a word: The more divine man is, the more fully does he resemble the plant. The plant of all forms of nature is

[22] *Lucinde p.* 77 ff. 'Idylle über den Müssiggang.'

the most moral and the most beautiful. And the highest and most perfect life is reached by simple vegetating."[23]

The first phase of Romanticism, the substitution of individual caprice for the moral law, we found exemplified in Tieck's *William Lovell.* The next step, consisting in open glorification of the flesh and open hostility to spiritual progress, was taken in Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde.* One thing now remained to make the caricature of the classic ideal of humanity complete: the flight into the land of the supranatural and the miraculous. This phase of Romanticism attained to its most perfect type in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.*

Novalis.

We cannot think of Novalis without feeling ourselves under the spell of a poetic genius in whom were united the simple freshness of a child and the heightened sensitiveness of a clairvoyant. There must have been something of the saint, something of sexless serenity, something one might say flowerlike in his delicate and fragile nature. His brief and pure life appears to us as an incessant but calm longing for inner transfiguration; as a gradual, effortless growing into the spiritual; his philosophic aperçus show him as a mind that combined the transcendentalism of Fichte with the pantheism of Schelling. The latter in the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797) formulates his belief in the words[24]: "The system of nature is at the same time the system of our spirit. Nature is visible spirit; spirit is invisible nature." Novalis expresses the same thought in Fichtean phraseology[25]: "Ego=Non-Ego, the highest maxim of all science and art." Schelling in the treatise *Von der Weltseele* (1798) represents the universe as

His pantheism.

[23] That the Romantic aimlessness was not altogether unproductive, that above all it helped to bring about that extraordinary state of feminine culture which is revealed in such remarkable women as Caroline Schelling, Dorothea Schlegel, Rahel Varnhagen, Bettina von Arnim, can here only be hinted at.

[24] *Sämmtl. Werke* II, 55 f.

[25] *Schriften* II, *p.* 117.

a great animated whole, whose principal functions, the functions of attraction and repulsion, are one and the same in every realm of life, from the vast domain of atmospheric phenomena through the infinite variety of vegetable and animal processes to the loftiest speculations of the individual human mind. In many of the most characteristic aphorisms of Novalis we recognise a kindred view of the world as of oneness in polarity: "If God could become man, he can also become stone, plant, beast, and element; and in this manner there is perhaps a perpetual redemption going on in the universe.[26]—The plants are the girls, the animals the boys of nature.[27]—Water is a wet flame.[28] Fully comprehend ourselves we cannot, but we can and we shall more than comprehend ourselves[29] [i.e., only feeling can reveal to us our oneness with all life].—Every step inward, every glance into our own bosom, is at the same time an ascension, a sight of the truly outward.[30]—Philosophy is homesickness, a yearning to be at home in the All."[31] And the same joy in the instinctive, the unconscious, the dreamlike, which forms a leading note of the whole system of Schelling, we hear in Novalis's incomparable *Hymns to Night.* One might say that Schelling's whole creed, the belief in the identity of thinking and being, of life and death, was contained in the words with which the spirit of Novalis's departed love calls upon him to share her blissful existence[32]:

> O! sauge, Geliebter,
> Gewaltig mich an,
> Dass ich entschlummern
> Und lieben kann.
> Ich fühle des Todes
> Verjüngende Flut,
> Zu Balsam und Aether
> Verwandelt mein Blut.

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[26] *Schriften* II, 157. [27] *Ib.* 155. [28] *Ib.* 162. [29] *Ib.* 127. [30] *Ib.* [31] *Ib.* 116. [32] *Ib.* 8.

Ich lebe bei Tage
Voll Glauben und Mut,
Und sterbe die Nächte
In heiliger Glut.

How is it that a poet who had drunk so deeply from the well of life, who was endowed with such a profound instinct for the unity of existence, should after all have ended as the high-priest of a capricious mysticism and supernaturalism? The answer is not far to seek. Only the will bridges the gulf between the ideal and the real; only the moral command: Thou shalt! establishes the unity of matter and spirit. This homely truth which in one form or another shines out from the whole life-work of Kant and Herder, of Goethe and Schiller, was something entirely hidden from the overrefined circles to which Novalis belonged. To him, as to the rest of the Romanticists, conscious activity was a sin against the Holy Ghost. What he called the highest life was at bottom something purely negative, a fathomless nothing, complete absence of endeavour, absolutely aimless contemplation. No wonder that the actual life with its manifold claims on will and self-consciousness should have appeared to him as "a disease of the spirit,"[33] that the visible world should have seemed to him a chaotic dream, and dreams the only true reality. No wonder that his pantheistic inclinations should have led him, not to a firm belief in the supreme rule of an all-pervading and all-embracing moral law, but to a superstitious belief in the divineness of individual caprice and fancy. No wonder that he should have found the true object of poetry in representing the miraculous and the irrational; that he should have reviled the Reformation and glorified the Jesuits[34]; that he should

His capriciousness.

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[33] *Schriften* II, 156.

[34] Cf. the essay *Die Christenheit oder Europa; Schriften*[4] I, 187 ff. (omitted from the fifth edition).

have fled from what he was pleased to call the infidelity and frivolity of modern science to the fairy-land of a fantastic Mediævalism.

It cannot be stated too emphatically that what the early Romanticists were pleased to call the Middle Ages was far from being the Middle Ages of history. It was as little a reality as the natural man of Rousseau's or the ideal Greek of Schiller's imagination was a reality. It was simply a new Arcadia, another form of that craving for an innocent, childlike existence which seems to be a concomitant phenomenon of all highly developed civilizations. And just as the North American Indian of to-day would probably fail to recognise his likeness in the noble and sentimental savages who in the literary tradition of the eighteenth century were wont to put the perfidious European to shame; as the patriotic Athenian of the time of Pericles would probably have declined to be classed together with the philanthropic and ethereal being which the era of Enlightenment was fond of imagining as truly Grecian;—so the mediæval knight and burgher would hardly have been able to suppress a scornful smile if they had foreseen what extravagant and absurd rôles they would be made to play in Romantic literature.

Fantastic character of Romantic Mediævalism.

The Middle Ages, as we have seen before, was an era of strong collectivistic tendencies, of most energetic social organization. The sinking of the individual in great public tasks, the predominance of corporate consciousness — whether it be represented by church, empire, knighthood, or burgherdom—over private interest, formed its most characteristic feature. Mediæval literature and art, even where they dwell on individual experience, always presuppose the existence of a great organic whole within which the individual moves and has its being. Even over the most diversified representations of actual life, such as Wolfram's *Parzival* or the paintings of a Van Eyck or Memlinc, there is spread the halo of

The true mediæval spirit.

an all-encircling, divine presence which sanctifies the trivial and the fleeting. Let us here for a moment recall once more Memlinc's picture of The Seven Joys of Mary[35] which came to our mind when considering Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*.[36] Here we have a most variegated landscape, mountains and hillsides, rivers and meadows, rocky passes and the open sea, lowly hamlets and a gorgeous city; we have the greatest diversity of actions, the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Slaughter of the Innocents, the Travels of the Magi, Christ's Resurrection, the Walk to Emmaus, Mary's Death and Assumption. And yet this multitude of scenes and figures does not bewilder us. We feel they are held together by an inner bond, we accept them as so many different phases of the one great central action of the Christian legend: the redemption of the flesh through the incarnate God.

Now compare with this the following scenery from Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*[37] — a scenery intended, undoubtedly, to produce an effect similar to that of some mediæval painting like Memlinc's.

"They looked down upon a romantic country which was strewn with cities and castles, with temples and monuments, and which combined all the grace of cultivated plains with the awful chasms of the desert and a rocky wilderness. The mountain-tops in their ice and snow covers were shining like airy flames. The plain was smiling in its freshest green. The distance was merged into all shades of blue, and from the darkness of the sea the pennants of innumerable masts were flying. In the background was seen a shipwreck; nearer by, peasants in gay country frolic. Yonder, the majestic spectacle of a volcano in action, the devastations of an earthquake; here, a pair of lovers in sweet embrace under shady trees. On this side, a maiden lying on her bier, the distressed lover embracing her, the weeping parents standing by; on another, a lovely mother with a child at her

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[35] Cf. Sulpiz Boisserée, *Briefwechsel mit Goethe p.* 29.

[36] Cf. *supra p.* 360 f.

[37] *Heinrich v. Ofterdingen* I, 9; *Schr.* I, 180 ff.

breast, angels sitting at her feet and looking down from the boughs overhead. The scenes changed continually and finally streamed together into one great mysterious spectacle. Heaven and earth were in revolt. All the terrors had broken loose. A mighty voice called to arms. A ghastly army of skeletons with black standards came down from the mountains like a hurricane and fell upon the life that sported in the valley. A terrible slaughter began, the earth trembled, the storm roared, and the night was rent by awful meteors. A funeral-pile rose higher and higher, and the children of life were consumed in its flames. Suddenly out of the heap of ashes there broke forth a stream, milky blue. The spectres scattered, but the flood rose and rose and devoured the gruesome brood. Soon all the terrors had vanished. Heaven and earth flowed together in sweet music. A wondrous flower swam resplendent on the gentle waves."

Romantic Mediævalism a symptom of social disintegration.

What is this but an idle play of fancy, a degradation of art to the rôle of a juggler, a wilful jumbling together of conceptions which have nothing in common, a complete failure to give the impression of an organic and harmonious whole? It is a typical instance of the difference between the mediæval and the Romantic spirit. The fanciful exterior of mediæval life, its simple naïve joy in the mysterious, its childlike belief in the impossible, rested on the solid foundation of an unbroken tradition, of an implicit faith in divine omnipotence and goodness. It was counterbalanced by an earnest devotion to common social tasks, by a strong sense of mutual interdependence, of the moral obligation of each to all. The Romantic predilection for mystery and wonder proceeded from the overwrought imagination of extreme individualists and freethinkers. It had no moral background. It was devoid of truly religious feeling. It was a literary symptom of social disintegration, a concomitant phenomenon of the final breakdown of the Holy Roman Empire. The mysterious 'blue flower,' in the pursuit of which Heinrich von Ofterdingen consumes his life, was a fit symbol of the aimless and fantastic yearning in which not only Novalis but the majority of the cultivated youth

of his time squandered their intellectual energies, and which was to plunge the country into the disasters of Austerlitz and Jena.

Heinrich von Ofterdingen.

It is instructive to compare *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, the representative novel of Romanticism, with representative works of other ages or tendencies, such as Wolfram's *Parzival*, Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*, *Wilhelm Meister*. In all three of these romances, the hero enters into a conflict with the world and himself, in all three of them he is enriched and strengthened by this very conflict. Parzival wins the crown of life by earnest striving for self-mastery and by active work for the common weal. Simplicissimus, though tossed about in a sea of meanness and vice, maintains after all his moral nature and at last reaches the harbour of a tranquil indifference to outward circumstance. Wilhelm Meister, though striving for self-culture, is led through contact with the most varied conditions of society to a perfectly universal sympathy with actual life.

Nothing of all this do we find in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.* "Die Welt wird Traum, der Traum wird Welt"[38]—this is the ideal of existence held up to us here. In the whole novel, not a single thing is done which may be called an act of free moral endeavour, not a single character appears whose will power would be equal to any decisive test. The book impresses us as a series of charming hallucinations; it is as though the subconscious self had emancipated itself from the will and were roaming about, in sweet intoxication, through the shadow-land of the incoherent and the incredible.

The air is filled with gentle music, a blue haze enshrouds the distance; mediæval merchants with faces of pre-Raphaelite saints ride on the highway, discussing in chorus questions of poetry and art; hidden paths lead through rock and underbrush to subterranean caverns, where venerable

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[38] *Heinr. v. Oft.* II, 1; *l. c.* 213.

hermits are poring over prophetic books; voices are heard from beneath the ground, visions appear in the trees, spirits of the departed return in manifold reincarnations. In the midst of these fantastic surroundings we see Heinrich himself travelling in search of the wonderful flower on which he once has gazed in a dream, the symbol of ideal poetry; and the further he travels, the further is he removed from the life of reality, the more completely does he seem to lose his human identity. So that we are not surprised to hear that for awhile he dwells among the dead; that he lives through all the ages of history; that the various maidens in whose love he finds the same delight which the vision of the flower had given him, are in reality one; that he at length reaches a stage of existence where[39] "men, beasts, plants, stones, stars, elements, sounds, colours, commune with each other like one family, act and talk like one race," and that he himself is transformed successively into a rock, a singing tree, and a golden wether.

In studying these fantastic ravings of an eccentric and uncontrolled imagination one understands how a generation whose reason and will had been benumbed by their influence, should have become unfit for discharging the simple duties of the citizen and the patriot; one comprehends Napoleon's contempt for "these German ideologists"; and one sees the inner justice of the political humiliation of Germany in 1806.

III. The Regeneration of the German People and the Wars of Liberation.

The recoil of Romanticism.

We have followed the mental process by which the Romantic movement carried the noble individualism of Goethe and Schiller to the extreme of selfishness and thus perverted the ideal of humanity into a caricature of humanity. We have now reached a point where we see the recoil, as it were, of the German mind

[39] *L. c.* 252.

from Romantic wilfulness, the rebound of Romanticism itself from individualistic caprice to collectivistic endeavour, the swinging back of the intellectual pendulum from self-culture and self-enjoyment to national tasks and national service.

Never perhaps has distress, the great teacher of mankind, taught a more impressive or wholesome lesson than in the German disaster of 1806. Never has a people undergone a more wonderful rejuvenation than the German people underwent in the very years following the downfall of Prussia. Never has there been a more striking illustration of the indestructibility of spiritual forces.

For who can doubt that it was Germany's spiritual past which saved her in this political cataclysm? Who does not see that it was the survival of the best of eighteenth-century individualism which led to the national uprising against Napoleon, and thus to the first manifestation of nineteenth-century collectivism? In other words, who would deny that what brought about the reorganization of the Prussian state and the delivery from foreign oppression was in the last analysis Kant's moral law, Herder's conception of national individuality, the ideal of complete manhood embodied in the work of Klopstock, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller? Let us look somewhat more closely at the form which these ideas took under the pressure of the great struggle for national existence.

1. Pantheism and Socialism.

Schleiermacher as individualist.

What might be said of the whole Romantic movement,—that it resembled a Janus-head looking on the one hand toward liberty, on the other toward unity—may with special fitness be said of Schleiermacher. None of the Romanticists was a more enthusiastic advocate of individualism than he; none was a more radical hater of conventional forms. Through an *Essay on the Immorality of all Morals* he first won the confidence of

Friedrich Schlegel,[40] and Schlegel's *Lucinde* he greeted as the consummation of art, as a poem in which the "divine flower of love" had for the first time been represented worthily and truthfully.[41] Even those works in which he has embodied his finest feelings and his best thought, the *Discourses on Religion* (1799) and the *Monologues* (1800), exalt the sacredness of individual character in a manner that approaches the ecstatic.[42]

"Welcome to me, thrice welcome when I see the slaves tremble, sweet consciousness of liberty! beautiful calmness of a serene mind with which I greet the future, my free possession, not my mistress! The gods only, the fictitious ones, are ruled by fate, because they have no inner life; and the meanest of mortals, because they have destroyed it,—not the man who acts freely from within, as is his portion. Where is the limit of my power? Impossible is for me only what has been made so through the blending in my own self of freedom and necessity. Strangely confused he to whom this limitation of his activity appears as an extraneous force—a limitation which is an integral part of his existence, his freedom, his will! Thus I live in the consciousness of my whole nature. To become ever more what I am is my only aim; every act of my life is a special phase of this one aim. Let time bring, as it may, material and opportunity for the moulding and manifesting of my inner self. I shun nothing; all is the same to me."

This is one side of Schleiermacher. It is the side which connects him most intimately with Kantian transcendentalism and the individualistic ideal of the classic poets. But it is by no means his whole self. There is another Schleiermacher looking toward the collectivistic ideal of the future.

More deeply than most of his contemporaries he felt the agony of isolation, of intellectual loneliness, to which the absence of great national tasks had condemned the best men

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[40] Cf. Haym *l. c.* 415.

[41] Cf. his *Vertraute Briefe über Fr. Schlegels Lucinde; Sämmtl. Werke, Abteil.* 3, I, 421 ff.

[42] *Monologen* 4; *l. c.* 396 ff.

of his age. His innermost being revolted against the petty divisions of class, of rank, of profession, in which he saw the society of his time arrayed against itself. He craved a larger public spirit which should lead all separate activities into a common channel, which should unite the whole nation in work for spiritual freedom. "Where," he exclaims in the *Monologues*, thinking of course of Plato's *Republic*, "where are the ancient dreams of the philosophers about the state? Where is the consciousness, which ought never to leave us, that we are all part of our nation's thought, imagination, and activity? Where is the love which we ought to cherish for this self-created larger existence of ours? Where is the devotion which would rather sacrifice the narrow consciousness of personality than lose this wider collective consciousness; which would rather risk the individual life than that the fatherland should perish? So far removed is this age from even the dimmest conception of what this highest form of human life means, that they think that state the best which is felt the least, that the noblest product of the human mind, through which we are to develop our nature to its fullest possibilities, is considered by them a necessary evil." Hence there is no community of higher interests in this generation. Here and there a brooding thinker, a solitary dreamer, who has lifted himself above the prevailing selfishness, leads a hidden existence,[44] "a stranger to the life that surrounds him, a prophetic citizen of a future society.—In vain does he look to others for sympathy with what is most sacred to him. Even to ask for such sympathy seems folly to the children of this age; and to divine a higher and more intimate community of spirits, nay, to work for it in spite of narrowness and prejudice, is the height of madness."

Schleiermacher as collectivist.

What is needed, then, is a new faith, a faith consistent

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[43] *Monologen* 3; *l. c.* 388. [44] *Ib.* 391. 385 f.

with our best insight and at the same time appealing to the common feeling of humanity. And this faith Schleiermacher finds in the pantheistic undercurrent of Kantian philosophy. To have shown the essential harmony between Spinoza, Kant, and Christianity, to have made the latent pantheism of the moral law a motive power in the religious life of the nineteenth century, is Schleiermacher's great achievement.

His pantheism.

From the discord of individual opinions, from the self-sufficiency of a shallow and capricious culture, he called his contemporaries back to an earnest belief in an all-embracing and an all-controlling spiritual order. Comprehensiveness of view the prime virtue of the modern man:—this is the fundamental thought of the *Discourses on Religion*. Only by looking at things in their connection with the totality of things are we able to see them rightly. Only by feeling ourselves as living organs of a living universe are we able to understand ourselves. The world is mute to him who sees only separate phenomena.[45] To him who looks at it, as Jesus, Spinoza, and Kant do, *sub specie aeterni*, it is full of divine, eternal music.[46]

The pantheistic religion.

A religion of this kind—for the feeling of the oneness of all nature *is* religion—is destined to be the great peacemaker and unifier of the ages to come. For such a religion enters into all relations of life, and makes every feeling a bond between the individual and the world at large. It opens the eye to a divining sense of the immanent law, which rules the greatest and the smallest, which shows itself in apparent perturbations of its order no less than in the ordinary course of natural events. It makes us see that everything is divine, that everything is a necessary link in

[45] *Reden über d. Religion*[2]; *Sämmtl. Werke, Abt.* 1, I, 228. 230. 234. —Cf. the comparison of Schleiermacher's *Reden* with Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) in Boyesen's *Essays p.* 353 f.

[46] *Reden über d. Rel.; l. c.* 190. 213.

the great chain of life, that evil is nothing but a condition of the universal good. It points toward the true sources of individual thought and endeavour; for "he who in his best moments does not feel that he is driven by a divine inspiration, who in such moments does not feel himself in immediate contact with the All, has no religion."[47] It imbues us with a firm trust in the progress of humanity, by teaching us how everywhere and at all times "the crude, the uncouth, the formless, is ultimately absorbed into some organic whole."[48] It makes the highest conceptions of all human thought, the ideas of God and immortality, an essential and integral part of every individual life.[49]

"The common conception of God as a being outside or behind the world, far from being the one and all of religion, is only a most inadequate manner of expressing it. The true essence of religion lies in being filled with the deity as we find it in ourselves no less than in the world. So, the goal of religious life is not the immortality which many desire and believe in, the immortality outside and beyond time, but an immortality which we may attain even in this life, a task in the solution of which we are continually engaged. In the midst of the finite to grow into the infinite, to be eternal in every moment, that is the immortality which religion offers."

Schleiermacher as a public man.

Thus we observe in Schleiermacher what we observed in Kant and Herder, in Goethe and Schiller, the blending of two apparently contrasting ideals, the reconciliation of free personality and common endeavour. But while, broadly speaking, there was in the classic poets and thinkers a decided preponderance of the individualistic element over the collectivistic, the reverse is true of Schleiermacher. Fully accepting their demand for the highest intellectual and artistic culture, he felt more deeply than any of them the necessity of rooting all indi-

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[47] *Reden über d. Rel.; l. c.* 250. [48] *Ib.* 240.

[49] *Ib. p.* 264.—Cf. the masterly analysis of the *Reden* in Haym *l. c.* 417 ff. and W. Dilthey, *Schleiermachers Leben.*

vidual culture in common convictions about the ultimate aims of existence.

More clearly than they he saw that the breakdown of all outward forms of traditional belief towards which the intellectual life of Germany ever since the Reformation had been drifting, must inevitably lead to a loosening of all social bonds, unless it were to give rise to a purer, finer, more spiritual, but not, on that account, less universal faith. In the principles of this faith, in other words in a pantheistic religion, he saw the fulfilment of Protestantism; in the spreading of these principles he found the task of his own life; on the hope of their ultimate victory rested his trust in Germany's future, even in the midst of crushing defeat and disaster. "Germany is still there," he wrote[50] in 1806, the year of deepest national humiliation, "her spiritual power is undiminished, and to fulfil her mission she will rise with unexpected might, worthy of her ancient heroes and her inborn strength." In his long and successful career as professor of theology at the University of Berlin, in the founding of which he with Fichte and Wilhelm von Humboldt took a most distinguished and never-to-be-forgotten part, Schleiermacher had ample opportunity to redeem the pledge contained in these words, by unremitting and courageous work in the service of true spiritual freedom.

Fichte.

About the same time that Schleiermacher, inspired by Kantian thought, was led to a faith which links the individual to the universe, Fichte, he too a believer in the supremacy of the moral law, became the forerunner of modern German socialism.

The inner affinity of Fichte's ethical convictions to those of Kant is easily seen. To both the external world is a product of the mind. Both believe in moral freedom as the fundamental principle of human life. Both find in the

[50] In the *Nachrede* added to the second edition of the *Reden; l. c.* 456. Cf. G. Baur, *Schleiermacher als Prediger in d. Zeit v. Deutschlds Erniedrigung u. Erhebung p.* 8 ff.

voice of conscience the highest manifestation of the divine. It is only a further development of Kantian transcendentalism when Fichte in the essay *On the Foundation of our Belief in a Divine Order of the Universe* (1798) sums up his creed in the words[51]: "Our world is the material for our duty made manifest to our senses; herein lies the true reality of things, the substance of all appearance." It is only a dithyrambic paraphrase of Kantian principles when in the *Appeal to the Public against the Charge of Atheism* (1799) he describes the revolution wrought in the life of the individual by means of a full grasp of transcendental views.[51a] "This earth of ours with all its splendours which in your childish ignorance you fancied yourselves to be in need of; this sun of ours and the thousand times thousand suns which surround it; all the earths which you divine about every one of these thousand times thousand suns;—this whole vast universe the thought of which makes your soul tremble is nothing but a faint reflex of your own endless and for ever progressing existence. You may boldly oppose your infinitude to the vast universe and say: How should I fear thy might, which affects only what is like thee and never reaches into my sphere! Thou art changeable, not I; all thy metamorphoses are only a spectacle for me, and I shall always hover entire over the scattered fragments of thy forms."

Comparison of Fichte and Kant.

Yet with all this, what a difference between Kant, the private individual, the lonely thinker, the dutiful subject of Frederick the Great, the man whose life was affected only in its decline by the new political ideals born in the French Revolution,—and Fichte, the restless agitator,

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[51] *Ueber d. Grund unseres Glaubens an e. göttl. Weltregierung* (1798); *Sämmtl. Werke* V, 185. Cf. *D. Bestimmung d. Menschen* (1800); *ib.* II, 163.

[51a] *Appellation an d. Publikum gegen d. Anklage d. Atheismus; l. c.* V, 236 f. Jul. Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* IV, 70, erroneously quotes this passage as belonging to the *Bestimmung d. Menschen.*

the fiery orator, the witness of the catastrophe of 1806, the hater of Napoleon, the man whose best years were given up to the work of national regeneration, whose premature death in the midst of his country's uprising was a sacrifice to the common cause! Kant addresses himself primarily to the intellect. The abstract man, as a being endowed with reason and instinct, is the chief object of his study. A just administration of private affairs is the fixed point round which his moral philosophy revolves. Fichte appeals primarily to the will. The very soul of his ethics is the idea of the absorption of the individual in the common life. A perfect society, not the perfect man, is the ideal with which his whole philosophy is inspired.[52] The scholar is to him a public character, a priest of truth, a warrior for freedom and culture, whose very life must count for nothing when he is called upon to defend a principle.[53] Individual life is no life except in so far as it is freely given to the cause of right and reason.[54] It is a clear demand of justice that every individual should have the same opportunity as all others to give his share to the common cause; and as long as the state has not organized labour in such a manner as to insure to all its members this possibility of a free surrender to the whole, it falls short of its most essential duty.[55]

Nowhere has Fichte given to these ideas a more direct application to the political problems of his own day than

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[52] Cf. Ed. Zeller, *Fichte als Politiker;* in his *Vortr. u. Abhandlgen p.* 140 ff.

[53] Cf. the *Vorlesungen über d. Bestimmung d. Gelehrten* (1794); *Werke* VI, 291 ff.; and *Ueber d. Wesen d. Gelehrten* (1805); *ib.* 349 ff.

[54] Cf. *D. Bestimmung d. Menschen* III, 2; *l. c.* II, 265 ff.

[55] Cf. *D. geschlossene Handelsstaat* (1800); *l. c.* III, 387 ff.—Grotesque and impracticable as the economic propositions of this essay are, its essential thought, the moral obligation of the state to regulate industrial production, has become one of the most powerful social agencies of the present day.

in two courses of lectures delivered at Berlin, the one a year and a half before the battle of Jena, the other at a time when the Prussian capital had been changed to a French garrison: the *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (Fundamental Principles of the Present Age), 1804–5, and the *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Addresses to the German Nation), 1807–8.

Arndt's Geist der Zeit.

It is interesting to compare Fichte's *Grundzüge* with an essay of kindred purpose which appeared almost simultaneously with it: Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Geist der Zeit* (Spirit of the Age, 1806). Arndt, the popular writer, the patriotic historian, appeals above all to the sense of national honour. There was a time when the German name was respected in Europe, when the cathedrals of Strassburg and Cologne, the merchant fleets of the Hanse, the works of Dürer, the deeds of Luther, told the world of a people in whom the spirit of lawful freedom and sturdy citizenship was alive. This time, alas! is gone. Internal dissension, outward humiliations, the despotism of the princes, the indifference of the masses,—all this has contributed to deprive even the educated classes of whatever they had of active interest in the affairs of home and country. Our poets walk among us like spirits of the past; they are strangers among a people which does not understand their language. Our scholars are ambitious busy-bodies heaping up endless material for knowledge, without being able to make use of it. Our critics are hair-splitting scribblers, without any heart for what is great and good, without any knowledge of real life. Our whole age is over-cultured and impotent,[56] "too wise for this earth,

[56] *Geist d. Zeit*, first ed., *p.* 90.—Among other patriotic writers who endeavoured to open the eyes of the people to the wretchedness of existing public conditions, Seume, the author of the *Spaziergang nach Syrakus* (1802) deserves especial mention. His *Mein Sommer 1805* (1806) gives a most drastic description of the degrading effects of Napoleonic oppression.

too cowardly for heaven." Only by completely sweeping away the ruling selfishness and servility, by conjuring up a new public spirit, by becoming what we are meant to be: a free, united, powerful nation, can we be saved.

While Arndt exposes the fundamental immorality of Romantic wilfulness by way of historical criticism, Fichte accomplishes the same object by way of philosophical speculation. Inspired as he is by Rousseau and Schiller, he dreams, in the *Grundzüge*,[57] of a primitive state of innocence and instinctive righteousness lying at the beginning of human history, of a gradual falling away from this state of perfection through the conflict between authority and freedom, and of the final return to it through reason and culture. His own time he places midway between the ideal past and the ideal future, he sees in it "the epoch of revolt against the authority of reason, a period of complete lawlessness and egotism, a state of absolute sinfulness."

Fichte's Grundzüge des gegenw. Zeitalters.

To free ourselves from the curse of this wretched age is

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[57] The following is Fichte's own summing up of the different epochs in which, he thinks, the circle of human development is completed: "(1) Die Epoche der unbedingten Herrschaft der Vernunft durch den Instinct: *der Stand der Unschuld des Menschengeschlechts.* (2) Die Epoche, da der Vernunftinstinct in eine äusserlich zwingende Autorität verwandelt ist: *Der Stand der anhebenden Sünde.* (3) Die Epoche der Befreiung, unmittelbar von der gebietenden Autorität, mittelbar von der Botmässigkeit des Vernunftinstincts und der Vernunft überhaupt, das Zeitalter der völligen Ungebundenheit: *der Stand der vollendeten Sündhaftigkeit.* (4) Die Epoche der Vernunftwissenschaft, das Zeitalter, wo die Wahrheit als das Höchste anerkannt und am höchsten geliebt wird: *der Stand der anhebenden Rechtfertigung.* (5) Die Epoche der Vernunftkunst, das Zeitalter, da die Menschheit mit sicherer und unfehlbarer Hand sich selber zum getroffenen Abdrucke der Vernunft aufbauet: *der Stand der vollendeten Rechtfertigung und Heiligung.*" Of these, the third epoch corresponds to the present age. Cf. *Grundzüge* I; *Werke* VII, 11 f.—It is easy to see in this philosophic construction the reflex of Schiller's *Die Künstler.*

the task to which we have been called.[58] "Reason has to do only with the universal life, which is manifested to us human beings as the life of the race. If reason is eliminated from human affairs, there remains only the isolated individual. The rational life, therefore, consists in this, that the individual should forget himself in the species, sacrificing his existence to the existence of the whole; while the irrational life consists in this, that the individual should not consider or love anything but himself and should devote his whole existence to his own well-being. And if the rational is the good and the irrational the bad, then there is only one virtue: to forget one's self; and only one vice: to think of one's self." Here, then, is the path which will lead us to the goal. Whatever progress mankind thus far has made—for there is progress even in decay,—whatever blessings of civilization we possess, it has been made possible only through the privations, the sufferings, the self-sacrifice of men who, before our time, lived and died for the life of the race. Let us emulate these men. Let every one of us be a public character. Let our philosophers give themselves up to the service of the idea, our poets to the service of the beautiful. Let them be workers for mankind. Let them be conscious that it is not they but the universal spirit in them which speaks through their thought or their song, that it would be a sin against the spirit to degrade their talents to the bondage of personal ambition and vanity. Let our political life be freed from despotism and monopoly; let our social institutions be regulated on the basis of a common obligation of each to all. Let the working classes be made to feel[59] "that they serve, not the caprice of an individual, but the good of the whole, and this only so far as the whole is in need of them." Let the rich live in such a manner as to be able to say[60]: 'Not a farthing of our profits is spent without

Socialism.

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[58] *Grundzüge* II; *l. c. p.* 34. [59] *Ib.* XV; *l. c.* 223. [60] *Ib.* 224.

a benefit to higher culture; our gain is the gain of the community.' Let the ideal of a perfect society be the guiding motive of the age.

People who judge others by their own selfishness are wont to say that such an ideal is impracticable.[61] "But what entitles these persons to make their own nature a standard of the race? Truly, the noble can know how the ignoble feels; for all of us have been born in egotism and it costs struggle and pain to rid ouselves of this old Adam. But in no wise can the ignoble know how the noble feels; for he has never reached or passed through the latter's world, while the noble has indeed passed through his." As a matter of fact,[62] "nothing can live by itself and for itself, everything lives in the whole, and the whole continually sacrifices itself to itself in order to live anew. This is the law of life. Whatever has come to the consciousness of existence must fall a victim to the progress of all existence. Only there is a difference whether you are dragged to the shambles like a beast with bandaged eyes or whether, in full and joyous presentiment of the life which will spring forth from your sacrifice, you offer yourself freely on the altar of eternity."

The reorganization of Prussia.

Here the Kantian doctrine of duty has become a social ideal. Here it has assumed the shape of principles which in the near future were to give birth to the reform legislation of Stein and Hardenberg, the final abolition of serfdom, the establishment of universal military service, the introduction of municipal self-government—in short, the whole work of emancipation and reorganization, by which the Prussian state, between 1806 and 1813, succeeded in[63] "replacing what it had lost

[61] *Grundzüge* III; *l. c.* 36.

[62] *Ib.* V; *l. c.* 63.

[63] When, after the peace of Tilsit which cost Prussia all her territory between the Elbe and the Rhine, it was suggested to Frederick William III. to make good the loss of Halle University by establishing a university at Berlin, he replied: "Das ist recht, das ist brav;

in physical resources by moral strength"; and which transformed it from a bureaucratic machine into a national organism.

No man did nobler service in helping to complete this reorganization than Fichte himself. In the battle of Jena and its disastrous consequences he saw the final breakdown of the "era of absolute sinfulness," as he had characterized his own age in the lectures of 1804. Now that Prussia, shorn of more than half her territory, weighed down by the most crushing war indemnity, lay helpless and exhausted at the feet of her oppressors, he felt instinctively that the worst had come, that a new order of things had begun, that a better age was dawning. Now he raised his voice again—not to lament or to reprove, but to give courage and hope. From the very depth of national misery he pointed forward to an era of national triumphs. Under the very eyes of the French authorities, surrounded by spies and sycophants, in the full consciousness that by speaking out he should risk his own life, he did speak out: he delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation*, holding up to his countrymen the ideal of a public education, which was bound to become—as indeed it has become—an instrument of political unity and greatness.

The Reden an die deutsche Nation.

What were the essential features of this new education? Wherein lay its reorganizing power?

The new education.

Ever since the Thirty Years' War, the main tendency of German thought had been in the direction of individual freedom and culture. In Kant and Herder, in Goethe and Schiller, this movement had attained its climax: the ideal of a perfect personality had become so comprehensive as to embrace the ideal of a perfect society. But no

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der Staat muss durch geistige Kräfte ersetzen was er an physischen verloren hat." Cf. Häusser, *D. Gesch. v. Tode Friedr. d. Gr. b. z. Gründg d. d. Bundes* III, 174.

sooner had the movement thus in the great achievements of the classic writers attained to its most exalted form, than, through the wretchedness of the existing political conditions, it was thrown back to the wilfulness and anarchy of Romanticism; and Romanticism in its turn contributed to bring about the complete disintegration of the German empire in the struggle with Napoleon.

Demand of a new public spirit.

Here Fichte steps forward to demand a radical change in the guiding principles of national life. The principle of the old education—thus he declares—was individualism. Its fruits are to be seen in the loss of our political independence, in the very extinction of the name of Germany itself. If we are not to cease existing altogether, if we are to be a nation once more, we must create an entirely new public spirit, we must train our youth in continual and unconditional surrender to the state. The principle of the new education must be collectivism.

Heightening of personality.

Not as though the new education were to suppress personality. On the contrary, it will raise personality to a nobler plane. It will stimulate the freest individual activity by depriving it of selfish motives. From early youth the pupil will be made to feel that he belongs to a community which has a claim on his best talents and his highest aspirations. He will be made to know that superior advantages only entail greater responsibility, that work spent in acquiring individual skill or knowledge simply means more work to be spent for the common good.[64] He will be imbued with that pure love for intellectual activity which has nothing whatever to do with success or power or well-being, but rejoices in the activity itself.[65] He will be filled with that supreme desire to mani-

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[64] Cf. the end of the second speech; *Werke* VII, 294 f.—That Fichte in his educational views was influenced by Pestalozzi is well known.

[65] "Dass man um seiner Erhaltung und seines Wohlseins willen im Leben sich regen und bewegen könne, muss er gar nicht hören, und

fest in himself the moral order of the world, "before which egotism drops to the ground like a withered leaf." [66] He will be brought to find God in the ever-present inner command to act from no other impulse than this: to make his life a germ of the universal life.[67]

"Thus far mankind has grown as it happened to grow. This growing by chance is now at an end. For just where mankind has developed the farthest, it has been reduced to naught. If it is not to remain in this naught, it must make itself over again, it must create its own future. To become, by free and conscious effort, what it originally was by nature and unconsciously, this is the goal of the human race. It is for our time and our nation to begin this conscious striving for the goal, and thus to be a guide and a model for all future ages and all other nations." [68]

German character.

And now, with that sublime indifference to visible facts which makes the true seer, Fichte tells these downtrodden and humiliated Germans, as sixty-three years later Victor Hugo was to tell the vanquished French, that it is they on whom the future of the world depends. They are the only people of Europe which has preserved its nationality unadulterated, the only people which possesses a truly national language and literature, the only people which believes in the spirit, in the infinite, in the divineness of man, they are the only people worthy of this name; they are *the* people, the *Urvolk*.[69] If they are lost, all is lost. If the nation which has given to the world the freedom of conscience and the freedom of thought is to be extinguished, then the light of the world will be extinguished, all history will have been in vain. Countrymen of Luther, countrymen of Kant, shall it be thus? [70]

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ebensowenig, dass man um deswillen lerne, oder dass das Lernen dazu etwas helfen könne." Second speech ; *l. c.* 291.

[66] First speech ; *l. c.* 275.

[67] Third speech ; *l. c.* 304 f.

[68] *Ib.* 306.

[69] Cf. speeches 4–7.

[70] Cf. the peroration at the end of the fourteenth speech (*l. c.* 488 ff.), one of the few oratorical masterpieces of the world's literature.

One might say that the whole trend of German history from 1806 to 1870 has answered this question with one continuous, irresistible "No." But of all the numberless individual voices of which this great collective "No" is made up, none perhaps speaks louder and more impressively than the record of Berlin University during the first few years of its existence. In the winter semester of 1810, the year in which the Prussian Government founded the University with the avowed purpose of making it a centre of the new patriotic spirit, the enrolment lists showed an attendance of some 250 students. In the winter semester of 1811–12 there was a matriculation of 228; in the summer semester of 1813, of 28. The rest were in the war.[71]

University of Berlin.

2. The Renaissance of the German Past.

Nothing shows more clearly from what deep and tenacious roots modern German unity has sprung than the way in which for nearly two centuries the image of the German past appeared and reappeared in the minds of isolated thinkers and seers, until at the beginning of the nineteenth century it passed over into the mind of a whole generation. Surrounded by the misery and degradation of the Thirty Years' War, Opitz and his associates endeavoured to revive the purity of the "old and illustrious" German tongue, and Moscherosch dreamed of King Ariovistus holding court with his sturdy knights in the midst of a degenerate posterity.[72] At a time when the

National dreams in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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[71] Cf. R. Köpke, *D. Gründg d. Kgl. Fr. Wilh. Universität z. Berlin p.* 297. The figures given in the text comprise only the immatriculated students. The total number of hearers was much larger. In the winter of 1812 to '13, for instance, there were more than 600 hearers ; and more than 300 persons attended a single course on the *Nibelungenlied.* Cf. L. Geiger, *Berliner Analekten* in *Euphorion* I, 376.

[72] Cf. *supra p.* 201 f.

avarice of German princes caused their subjects to be slaughtered on the battlefields of the American Revolution, Klopstock sang of Hermann and Thusnelda. At a time when the depraved elegance of rococo art held the national genius in its deadly grasp, Herder pointed to the simple truthfulness and freedom of popular song, and the young Goethe revelled in the grandeur of Strassburg cathedral. And now, at the very time when it seemed as though the German nation had ceased to exist, when through the final dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire the last decrepit forms of the mediæval state were swept away, the Romanticists were led to the rediscovery of the true mediæval spirit.

National element in early Romanticism.

The Romanticists, as we have seen, were drawn toward the Middle Ages by the same desire which led the Classicists to ancient Greece, the desire to flee from an actual present in which there seemed to be no room for great and free personalities, to an ideal past. However fictitious and illusive these dreams of a perfect antiquity—whether classic or romantic—for the most part were, they could not fail to create emotions which needed only the right opportunity to convert themselves into patriotic deeds.

Hölderlin's Hyperion.

Nothing, for instance, could be more un-Grecian than the sentimental Classicism pervading Hölderlin's *Hyperion* (1797–99). Nothing could be more inactive than the æsthetic revelry in which this late-born offspring of an heroic race consumes himself, hunting forever after an ideal which is buried under the ruins of the centuries, longing for ever for a happiness which he would have no strength to bear. Yet, unmanly and un-Grecian as this young Greek undoubtedly is, there is in his æsthetic speculations something of the spirit which breeds heroes. He despises his time because it knows nothing but egotism and slavish care.[13] He sees in the beautiful the breath of

[13] Cf. especially *Sämmtl. Werke* ed. Schwab I, 2, *p.* 142 ff.

life which expands the hearts and makes them capable of self-sacrifice.[74] He feels that [75] "without freedom there is universal death"; that "whatever lives cannot have been created, must in its germ be of divine nature, raised above all external force and artifice, inviolable, eternal." And the one great effort to which he himself rises is inspired by the same cause for which two decades later all Europe hoped and trembled: the liberation of Hellas from the Turkish yoke.

"O Diotima," he writes to his beloved one from the scene of war,[76] "all melancholy is gone and my mind is firm and quick now that I live in a hopeful activity. I rise with the sun. I go where in the shade of the forest my warriors lie, and greet the thousands of bright eyes which open before me with wild joyfulness. A waking army! I know not its like, and all life in city and town is a swarm of bees compared with it. My squad gathers round me, and I talk to them of better days; and their eyes shine at the thought of the covenant which is to unite our people; and the glorious image of a state of freemen dawns upon them. Each for all and all for each! O Diotima, to see how all their pulses beat more strongly, how the gloomy forehead unfolds itself to hope, to stand thus in the midst of men, surrounded by faith and zeal, that is more than to behold earth and heaven and sea in all their glory."

The gradual coming into sight of the true Middle Ages.

If the image of the greatness of ancient Greece could stir even a morbidly subjective nature like Hölderlin's into the conception of a national cause before which all individual hopes and fears dwindle into nothing, it is not surprising that the memory of the German past, once having dawned upon the imagination of the Romanticists, should gradually have freed itself from the capricious interpretations of a subjective fancy, until at last it expanded into the vision of a mighty popular organism, inspired with a common thought, guided by a common will, devoted to the pursuit of common ideals. The gradual

[74] *L. c.* 145. [75] *Ib.* 131. [76] *Ib.* 103 f.

unfolding of this vision forms one of the most remarkable and most fascinating chapters in the history of Romanticism.

We have felt justified in calling[77] the Middle Ages of the early Romanticists the Eldorado of an overwrought and uncontrolled imagination. But we should fail to understand rightly even early Romanticism if we failed to see that with all their subjectivity and wilfulness there was in such men as Novalis, Tieck, Wackenroder, the Schlegels, an instinctive longing for a new corporate consciousness; that through all their aberrations and eccentricities they were dimly groping for a new binding faith. And if they did not, like Schleiermacher and Fichte, look toward the future for the coming of the new Jerusalem, but rather sought for it in the traditions of the past, they too were workers in the reconstruction of modern society. They restored the Catholic church, the guardian of popular custom and belief, to its rightful place in the national consciousness; they brought back to life the grand figures of the old national epics; they ushered in a new era of truly national poetry and art. They, in a word, made Herder's conception of national individuality, as a basis of all higher life, a power in modern German civilization.

Revival of Catholicism.

Only a blind Protestant partisanship can deny or deplore the fact that through the Romantic movement Catholicism has once more become a living factor in modern thought. The intellectual development of Germany during the three centuries following the religious Reformation, as we have seen again and again, had been a continual process of individualization. It was unavoidable that this process should have brought about a continually widening gap between the educated and the uneducated, that the cultivated few should have more and more lost touch with the broad masses of the people. In

[77] Cf. *supra p.* 424 ff.

the erratic flights of early Romanticism we saw the last and most baneful results of this disintegrating tendency; but we also saw how the very excesses and absurdities of Romanticism led to a reaction against the whole individualistic view of life, how in Schleiermacher's pantheism, in Fichte's socialistic dreams, there arose a new, collectivistic ideal. The return of the Romanticists to the old popular faith, the revival of Catholicism, is only another phase of this same collectivistic reaction.

Wackenroder.

"In former times," thus Wackenroder, the 'art-loving friar,' the youthful forerunner of Ruskin, sums up his view of the Middle Ages,[78] "in former times it was the custom to look at life as a beautiful art or craft to which all men profess allegiance. God was thought of as the master-workman, baptism as the apprentice's indenture, our earthly pilgrimage as the travelling-time of journeymen. Religion was to the men of those ages a book containing all the laws and rules of their trade, a compendium of all knowledge. Without religion life appeared to them only as a wild disorderly game, as an aimless darting to and fro of weavers' shuttles which produces no fabric. Religion was their staff and stay in all events, great or small; it gave a deep meaning even to the trivial; it was a magic tincture in which all things of this world could be dissolved; it spread a mild, uniform, harmonious light over the confused destinies of existence. Thus men lived their lives slowly and deliberately, step by step, ever mindful of a joyous presence, every moment being precious and full of weight. And when at last the great Master called them

[78] Cf. the *Schilderung wie die alten deutschen Künstler gelebt haben*, a posthumous essay of Wackenroder's, incorporated by his friend Tieck into the *Phantasieen über die Kunst* (1799); *DNL.* CXLV, 6 f. —The *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* alluded to in the text appeared in 1797, a year before Wackenroder's death. For an analysis of this work cf. H. Wölfflin in *Studien zur Litteraturgesch., Michael Bernays gewidmet*, *p.* 61 ff.

from their workshops, they surrendered themselves and all their tasks, dissolved in holy thoughts, serenely into his hands. And God made use of their completed labours to further his own mysterious design: for out of all the millions of lives that have left this earth, he builds, beyond the blue firmament, a new, more beautiful world, nearer to his throne, where all that is good will find its place."

The popular element in Catholicism.

Here we have the key to the understanding of the charm which Catholicism exerted upon the Romanticists. From the precipitous heights of spiritual culture, from the lonely mountain-peaks of philosophic speculation, to which the search for the ideal of personality had led them, they caught a new sight of the popular life below, its simplicity, its contentment, its quiet industriousness, and its concord with itself. And they could hardly be in doubt as to the ultimate source whence all these blessings had flowed. Even in those parts of the empire where Catholicism had been entirely superseded by the Protestant faith, even there, whatever there was left of popular tradition in festive customs and symbolic lore, was essentially Catholic. How much more was this the case in those parts where the old religion was still a bond of common life; where venerable cathedrals were still the scenes of priestly pomp and popular concourse; where the hilltops were still crowned with hospitable monasteries; and where the welcome sound of the Angelus at eventide would still be felt by high and low as a symbol of spiritual kinship!

It was this consonance of its institutional life with the popular instinct which attracted the Romanticists in Catholicism, not the intricacies of its theology. It was the beautiful symbolism of its forms, the serenity of its heaven, the pantheistic character of its mythology, the deep sense of nature pervading its legends, its sympathy with all that warms the heart and fosters the feeling of human fellowship. And it is not too much to say that most of what is best in Ro-

mantic literature and art bears the stamp of this truly human Catholicity.

Novalis's Geistliche Lieder.

Among the earlier Romantic poets there is none who has given as noble an expression to this spirit as Novalis, especially in the essay entitled *Christianity or Europe* and in his *Spiritual Songs* (1799). Insufficient as was his knowledge of historical facts, crude as were his conceptions about the part played by the Reformation in the development of the modern mind,[79] he felt instinctively that the mission of Catholicism for the advancement of higher culture was by no means ended. And from the imbuing of its traditional forms with the freedom of modern pantheistic thought he hoped for the birth of a purified religion which should fulfil Schleiermacher's dream of a reconciliation between knowledge and belief; which should unite the thinker and the poet, the educated and the uneducated, in common worship of the beautiful. A modern Angelus Silesius, he saw in Christ an image of the universal life, the Holy Communion he greeted as a mysterious fusion of his own soul with the world-spirit, the Virgin was to him a symbol of the transfigured existence for which he had always been pining. In the poetic representation of such conceptions as these Novalis reaches the climax of his art. For here his imagination does not roam about unfettered in the wonderland of capricious conceits; here it is guided and chastened by the tradition of eighteen hundred years, while at the same time it remains essentially fresh and individual. Here the sacred figures of the past have again returned to life. The Saviour of the world once more looks at us benignly from his mother's knee; once more we live through the agony of the cross; once more we rejoice to see the stone removed from the grave. And yet it is not a simple traditional piety that speaks from these poems. It is the craving of a highly cultivated individual to feel himself at

[79] Cf. *supra p.* 423.

one with the belief of his ancestors, to see the old legend in a new light, to find in it a poetic confirmation of his own philosophic view of life. The mythical event has here become an inner vision. Catholicism lends its symbolic language to the feelings of a pantheist.

> Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern,
> Maria, lieblich ausgedrückt,
> Doch keins von allen kann dich schildern,
> Wie meine Seele dich erblickt.
> Ich weiss nur, dass der Welt Getümmel
> Seitdem mir wie ein Traum verweht,
> Und ein unnennbar süsser Himmel
> Mir ewig im Gemüte steht.

Rarely has the old and the new been more happily blended, rarely has a traditional conception been more completely merged into the stream of deepest spiritual experience, than in these wonderful lines.[80]

Tieck as interpreter of mediæval life.

In a less degree than any of the founders of Romanticism was Ludwig Tieck able to divest himself of the fantastic wilfulness which formed so large a part of this whole movement. The well-nigh boundless versatility of his imagination was hardly ever made to give itself up without reserve to a great idea or a serious purpose. Even the best of his productions fail to create that deep and lasting impression which we receive from the contact with a truly original and creative mind. He was essentially a virtuoso. His poetry is chamber-music even where it affects the out-of-door character of popular song. It is a conscious playing with artistic forms rather than the self-revelation of an inspired soul. A man who could prevail upon himself to turn so homely and sincere a fairy-tale as *Puss in Boots* into a farcical satire of the modern stage (1797),[81] or modest

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[80] *Geistl. Lieder* XV; Schriften[5] II, 43.

[81] *Der gestiefelte Kater, ein Kindermärchen in* 3 *Akten*; first ed. in vol. 2 of the *Volksmärchen* (1797), reprinted in vol. 2 of the *Phantasus*

little Red Riding Hood into a priggish young damsel[82]; who would have us accept the effeminate culture of his *Sternbald* (1798), with its endless sing-song and art dilettanteism, as a picture of the rugged German life of the sixteenth century[83]; who was capable of deluding himself into the belief that he had faithfully portrayed the mediæval legend in his *Genoveva* (1800)[84] or *Octavianus* (1804),[85] with

(*Schriften* V, 161 ff.). The main point of this farce consists in this that the audience continually interrupts the action of the play by comments, criticisms, and noisy demonstrations, thus unconsciously betraying its own prejudice, ignorance, and lack of literary insight.

[82] *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rothkäppchens* in vol. 2 of the *Romantische Dichtungen* (1799. 1800); *Schr.* II, 327 ff. Imagine the little girl, such as we know her from the naive fairy tale, indulging in the following rationalistic reflection (*l. c.* 356), occasioned by the fact that another little girl, from the familiar daisy oracle, has prophesied her early death:

> Doch leb ich wohl länger wie du mit Lust.
> Denn man sieht, ich hab eine bessere Brust;
> Drum sind die Haare so weggeflogen.
> Meine Mutter hat mich zu gut erzogen,
> Als dass ich an so was glauben sollte.
> Ich wüsste auch nicht, wie es die Blume wissen wollte;
> Erst ist sie gelb, und wird dann greis,
> Wie ein kindischer Mann, der von sich nicht weiss;
> Da steht sie am Wege, und kömmt ein Wind,
> Ihr alle Haare ausgerissen sind.

Tieck never got over the effects of his early Berlin education.

[83] *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen, eine altdeutsche Geschichte* (1798), *DNL.* CXLV, 105 ff. A second, revised edition *Schr.* XVI. Cf. the telling characterization of this novel by Caroline Schlegel (Waitz, *Caroline* I, 219): "Viele liebliche Sonnenaufgänge und Frühlinge sind wieder da; Tag und Nacht wechseln fleissig, Sonne, Mond und Sterne ziehen auf, die Vöglein singen; es ist das alles sehr artig, aber doch leer, und ein kleinlicher Wechsel von Stimmungen und Gefühlen im Sternbald, kleinlich dargestellt."

[84] *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva; Schr.* II, 1 ff. Nearly the whole plot of this drama, instead of being acted, is related by St. Boniface, who introduces himself in the beginning as a sort of Chorus: "Ich bin der wackre Bonifacius" etc.

[85] *Kaiser Octavianus, ein Lustspiel in 2 Theilen; Schr.* I. This

their musical potpourris and decorative trickeries, with their continual change from archaic clumsiness to modern sentimentality, with their incessant swinging to and fro from the Miracle Play to Shakspere, from Calderon to Hans Sachs, from Petrarch to the Puppet-show,—such a man cannot be said to have been even a reproductive genius of the very highest order. With all this, we respect in Tieck one of those subtle minds, whose peculiar office it seems to be to interpret one age to another. Whatever his shortcomings as an artist, his services as a poetic expositor of the Middle Ages cannot be disputed. If Novalis resuscitated Catholicism as an organ of profound religious feeling, we owe to Tieck the discovery of what may be called the worldly side of Catholicism—its affinity with the popular fancy, its wealth of passion, instinct, sensuousness, the artistic quality of its rites and legends, the picturesqueness of the life engendered by it.

It is indeed well-nigh impossible to glance over the pages of any of Tieck's writings from the *Volksmärchen* (1797) to *Phantasus* (1812),[86a] without finding everywhere abundant evidence of an extraordinary power of conjuring up at least the outward show, the stage scenery, as it were, of an age, at one with itself, swayed by common religious emotions, assured of the reality of an unseen yet ever-present and all-pervading spiritual existence. His is a world of small distances and short perspectives but endless possibi-

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'drama' consists of ten acts! The part of Chorus is here taken chiefly by an allegorical figure, 'Die Romanze,' who at the end of the prologue (*l. c.* 33) conjures up the mediæval world with the words, so often repeated since:

> Mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht,
> Die den Sinn gefangen hält,
> Wundervolle Märchenwelt,
> Steig auf in der alten Pracht!

[86a] Tieck's last period, in which he returned to the cultivation of the modern novel, cannot here be considered. Cf. J. Minor, *Tieck als Novellendichter; Akad. Blätter* I, 129 ff.

lities. A bluish haze surrounds everything. As in a dream, everything seems to be alive. The brook sobs, the trees shudder, the trailing clouds mysteriously beckon us to follow, the silence of the forest[86] tells wondrous tales, the rocks and cliffs stretch out invisible hands and utter sounds of nameless woe. The minds of men are full of forebodings, they seem to be oppressed with the mass of sensations crowding in upon them. Sometimes a man will leave everything, his home, his country, his dear ones, and wander off in search of he knows not what. For years he may live peacefully and quietly in his new surroundings. Nobody will inquire into his past, nobody will wonder at the strangeness of his habits, for every one might at a given opportunity act just as strangely as he. All of a sudden, a fleeting vision, a chance word, a bird's cry, the sight of a certain sign, starts him up. The spirit has taken hold of him again, and will probably keep hold of him and drag him to the grave.[87] Dark powers dwell in the bowels of the earth, enticing the children of men into their enchanted realm. But even at the entrance of the 'Venusberg' there stands the faithful Eckart, warning the wayward and leading them back to light.[88] And over all the lust and sin and death of this world there is shed a glow from above: the church with its wealth of grace and beauty, with the prayers of its saints and the heroism of its warriors, with the inspiration of its poets, its artists and composers, lends a foretaste of heaven even to this earthly life, and unites the souls of men in the longing for the infinite.

What a difference between this world of Tieck's and that of an eighteenth-century rationalist, such as, for instance, Les-

[86] Tieck has coined the word 'Waldeinsamkeit.' Cf. *Schriften* IV, 152.

[87] Cf. especially the stories *Der blonde Eckbert* (*Schr.* IV, 144 ff.) and *Der Runenberg* (*ib.* 214 ff.), and the exquisite characterization of Tieck's style, as manifested in these stories, by Heine, *Die romant. Schule* II (*Werke* ed. Elster V, 287).

[88] Cf. the story *Der getreue Eckart und der Tannenhäuser*; *Schr.* IV, 173 ff.

sing! How much less clear the air, how much more hemmed in the intellectual view, how much more vague and confused the outlines of things! But on the other hand, what a deepening of spiritual insight, what a widening of the imagination, what a quickening of the emotions has taken place; how much nearer seems the heart of nature, how much richer are the colours of life! We feel that a new age has opened, that another Renaissance has dawned. And if we cannot be surprised that in its trail there should have appeared the lurid figures of the 'Fate Tragedy,'[89] the spooks and doubles of an Amadeus Hoffmann,[90] and all the other reactionary ghosts of the palmy days of Metternich,—we also understand why there should have arisen from it gentle fairies like Fouqué's Undine (1811), good-natured pessimists like Chamisso's Schlemihl (1814), naïve children of the people like Brentano's Honest Casperl and Fair Annerl (1817), amiable dreamers like Wilhelm Müller's Waldhornist (1821) or Eichendorff's Taugenichts (1826); why it should have given rise, in Raimund's harmless fairy-land pieces (1823–33), to the revival of a truly popular stage; why it should have unloosed the deepest chords of Beethoven's soul and called forth a wealth of melody from Weber and Schubert; why it should have inspired artists like Overbeck,

His influence upon later Romanticism.

[89] Cf. *Das Schicksalsdrama* ed. J. Minor; *DNL.* CLI. The volume contains among other selections Zacharias Werner's *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar* (1809; printed 1815), Müllner's *Die Schuld* (1812), and Houwald's *Der Leuchtthurm* (1819; printed 1821). Cf. also J. Minor, *Die Schicksalstragoedie in ihren Hauptvertretern.* Even in that strange mixture of bombast, forced naturalness, and fantastic grandeur which marks the dramas of Christian Grabbe (*Don Juan und Faust* 1829; *DNL.* CLXI) the influence of Tieck can easily be traced.

[90] This refers of course to such works as the *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814; the best of them *Der goldene Topf*), or *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1815). That Hoffmann, with all his somnambulism and madness, was at the same time a master of realistic description and of psychological analysis, need hardly be added. Cf. G. Ellinger, *E. T. A. Hoffmann: s. Leben u. s. Werke.*

Cornelius, Schwind, Ludwig Richter, to reveal the innermost secrets and longings of the popular heart; why it should have given a second youth to the aged Goethe; why it should have given life to the best in German lyrics of the nineteenth century from Uhland and Heine to Scheffel and Richard Wagner.

It is the first decade of the century, the time which saw the cession to France of all the territory to the left of the Rhine (1801), the wholesale secularization of Catholic church property (1803), the break-down of Prussia and the formal abdication of the German Emperor (1806), the final defeat of Austria (1809), the forced participation of German troops in the Russian campaign (1812); it is the days of the Kingdom of Westphalia and the Rhenish Confederation, of the murder of Palm, of the tragic end of a Schill and a Hofer; it is, in a word, the years of deepest national misery, which ripened the first full fruits of this new, mediæval Renaissance, which brought to light the true features of by-gone German greatness, which gave a new life to the old national traditions, to the Minnesingers and the *Nibelungenlied*, to the popular song and the popular tale.

The mediæval Renaissance coincides with the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire.

Here more clearly than anywhere else do we see the threads which connect the Romantic movement with Herder. Herder had been the first to conceive of literature as an outgrowth of national life, the first to listen to the voices of all ages and climes, the first to emphasize the essential unity of the great song of mankind. That the Romanticists did not fall behind Herder in cosmopolitan breadth there is no better proof than August Wilhelm Schlegel's classic *Lectures on Dramatic Literature and Art* (1809), his masterly translations of Shakspere (1797)[91] and Calderon (1804), Friedrich Schle-

Its cosmopolitan character.

[91] The first comprehensive attempt to introduce Shakspere in Germany (not to mention the garbled versions of the English comedians of the seventeenth century) had been made by Wieland, who between

gel's epoch-making Sanscrit studies (*Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, 1808), and the long list of similar adaptations of foreign tongues and literatures to German soil which have made German literature of the nineteenth century a meeting-ground of the best in all civilization, old and new, Christian and pagan, oriental and occidental. But it was only natural that the very collapse of national existence should have surrounded the attempts to rediscover the German people in mediæval German poetry with a passionate earnestness which had been foreign even to the fiery soul of Herder.

Tieck's view of German nationality.

Tieck, in the introduction to *Phantasus*, tells us how, when a youth, he used to dream of writing a description of German lands which was to connect the present with the most striking aspects of the past.

"In those days," he says,[92] "there were still a good many relics of the olden times before our eyes; there were monasteries, ecclesiastical principalities, free imperial towns, many ancient buildings which since have been demolished, many ancient works of art which since have been scattered; not a few mediæval customs were still alive; the popular festivals still preserved dignity and joyfulness; and you had to travel only a few miles to find different usages, buildings, institutions.

"To see, to feel, and to depict this varied world was my purpose; whatever is truly national in our works of painting, sculpture, and architecture; what manners and customs are peculiar to each province and town; what physical conditions surround every

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1762 and 1766 translated twenty-two of the dramas. This translation had been revised between 1775 and 1782 by Eschenburg. Schlegel was the first to give a poetic version. It is his language which, schooled by Bürger, inspired by Schiller, and chastened by the influence of Goethe, made Shakspere a German classic. Between 1797 and 1801 there appeared *Romeo*, *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Twelfth-Night*, *Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and the *English Histories* with the exception of *Richard III.* and *Henry VIII.* The former was added in 1810. Cf. M. Bernays, *Zur Entstehungsgesch. d. Schlegelschen Shakespeare.*

[92] *Schriften* IV, 14 ff. That there is a latent protest in this passage against Nicolai's *Reise durch Deutschland* (1783–96) is clear.

individual tribe, moulding it and being moulded by it:—all this was to be brought out as in a picture.

"The noble race of the Austrians preserving in their mountains the mirth of by-gone days I wished to defend against modern misunderstanding; I wished to exalt the warlike and pious Bavarians; I wished to depict the gentle, thoughtful, and imaginative Suabians in their garden-like country; the sprightly gay Franconians with their romantic variegated landscape—to whom Bamberg was a German Rome; the spirited tribes along the lordly Rhine; the upright Hessians, the handsome Thuringians whose forests still preserve form and face of the old knights; the Low-Germans, resembling in true-heartedness the Dutch, in strength and skill the English. Thus I would wander through the dear valleys and mountains, through our noble lands, once so happy and great, traversed (*durchrauscht*) by Rhine and Danube and ancient sagas, guarded by mountains and castles and German bravery, bedecked with those meadows of matchless green in which there dwell such dear homeliness and simple-mindedness. Truly, he who succeeded in reproducing thus from the depth of his feelings the features of his beloved fatherland would thereby have created a poem of most ravishing beauty."

One might say that this enchanting dream, although in a literal sense it has never been fulfilled, was at the bottom of all that the Romantic poets and writers have done toward the restoration of ancient German poetry and art.

Tieck himself—to mention only a few important phases of this work of reconstruction—gave the decisive impulse with his *Minnelieder aus dem schwäbischen Zeitalter* (1803).[93] Here for the first time an attempt was made to bring the beauty of mediæval German poetry home to the popular heart; here for the first time the Minnesong was considered in its full national bearing; here for the first time there seemed to rise into full view the spirit of an age in which "the most different minds

Tieck's Minnelieder.

[93] Cf. Jacob Grimm's tribute to the 'hinreissende Vorrede' of Tieck's work; *Kleinere Schriften* I, 6. That long before Tieck, from 1748 to 1759, there had appeared Bodmer's editions of the Minnesingers, is well known.

were still united in a common interest, when spring, beauty, longing, joy, were themes which never wearied, when incredible deeds of valour in war or tournament carried away all hearers, and when as the pillars and vaults of the cathedral embraced the assembled congregation, so religion embraced the whole of life and held all hearts in an equal bondage of love."[94]

About the same time that Tieck thus pointed toward the national foundations of chivalric song, in the winter of 1803 to 1804, August Wilhelm Schlegel delivered in Berlin those *Lectures on Belles Lettres and Art*[95] which represent the first comprehensive effort, after Herder's *Ideen*, to consider the history of literature, ancient and modern, as a process of social evolution.[96] And here, as a symbol of the heroic life of ancient Germany, there was conjured up the giant shade of the *Nibelungenlied.* Even before Schlegel, Johannes von Müller had praised the *Nibelungenlied* as the German *Iliad*[97]; Tieck in the introduction to the *Minnelieder* had thrown out the remark[98] that it would be as futile to inquire for an individual author of the German epic as Friedrich August Wolf had proved it to be with regard to the origin of the Homeric poems. But to Schlegel must be given the credit of having first revealed its gigantic proportions, of having first understood it fully as the work of the collective energy of a whole age, of having by his divinatory com-

A. W. Schlegel on the Nibelungenlied.

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[94] Words from Tieck's introduction; *Kritische Schr.* I, 195 f.

[95] *Vorlesungen über schöne Litteratur und Kunst* ed. J. Minor; *DLD. nr.* 17 ff.—The whole course embraced three successive winters, from 1801 to 1804. Selections from the *Lectures on Dramat. Lit.* in *DNL.* CXLIII.

[96] Here for the first time do we find the division of the history of German literature into four epochs—"mönchisch, ritterlich, bürgerlich, gelehrt"—which, with slight modifications, has remained the prevailing one ever since.

[97] Cf. Haym *l. c.* 826.

[98] *Krit. Schr.* I, 192.

prehension paved the way for the later criticism of Lachmann. And what a thrill of patriotic resolve must have run through his hearers[99] at the words[100]: "Let no one believe that such poems can be made out of nothing. There must be great deeds, before there can be great poems. Poetry and history are intimately connected, especially epic poetry is often only another and truer reflex of events than prose documents. And thus the present age may look here into the mirror of an heroic past, if, by looking, it is not made to feel too painfully its own nothingness."

Des Knaben Wunderhorn.

Hardly two years after these words were spoken, Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805),[101] opened up another view of this past by bringing to light the world of artless grace and sturdy truthfulness, of humour, joyfulness, daring, sentiment, revery, wisdom—hidden in the ancient Volkslied; and here again we see as the guiding motive the endeavour to revive the feeling of national individuality. The German folksong—this is the main idea of Arnim's introductory essay *Von Volksliedern*—was the expression of a common consciousness, it was the result of a national organization which united the people in a free public life, in guilds and trade associations, in common worship and in common mirth.

"Without popular activity there is no popular song, and rarely is there popular activity without the latter. Poetry speaks to all and in all, its commonness detracts from it as little as it

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[99] Among them was the young F. H. von der Hagen, who here received the stimulus for his later activity as commentator and editor of the *Nibelungenlied*. His modernized version of the poem appeared in 1807, the first of his editions 1810; Lachmann's *Ueber die ursprüngl. Gestalt d. Gedichts v. d. Nibelungen Noth* 1816.

[100] *L. c. nr.* 19, *p.* 120.

[101] The first vol is dated 1806, but it actually appeared in July, 1805. Cf. Jul. Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt. s. Lessing*[6] II, 401.

detracts from the trees of a forest that they are all green. For the very highest is the most common, the poet is a common spirit, a *spiritus familiaris* of the world's community."[102] But alas! this state of a truly popular life has long ago ceased to exist. Princely tyranny, class rule, vain scholasticism, supremacy of foreign fashions, contempt of the people, slavish submissiveness:—these have been the main features of German history in recent centuries; until at last the nation "came to look at laws as whirlwinds, or other like superhuman forces, against which there is no other help but passive resistance or submission or despair."[103]

And now, since the complete overturning of the social and political structure of the old Empire, it seems as though all hope of national regeneration were gone. "Good God! where are the ancient trees in whose shade only yesterday we rested? The primeval symbols of firmly established boundary lines, what has happened, what is happening to them? Almost forgotten are they among the people; vexed and surprised we stumble against their roots."[104] To make these roots grow again, to prevent the fertile soil of popular life from being entirely washed away, this, Arnim thinks, is the duty and task of every patriot. For although the old institutions are dead, the spirit which created them is not extinct. And who knows whether from these songs of students and journeymen, of soldiers and hunters, of peasant-lads and lusty squires, there is not to spring forth a new and healthy era of national existence? "How Germany is to be reborn, who can tell? But he who bears her in his bosom, feels it stirring mightily within."[105]

Görres's Volksbücher.

Again only two years after Arnim and Brentano had "rallied their scattered nation under the standard of popular song,"[106] Joseph Görres in *Die teutschen Volksbücher* (1807), with a voice unable to control the tumult of long-suppressed wrath, shame, love, wonder, hope, told his people of the priceless treas-

[102] Cf. *Wunderhorn* ed. Boxberger I, 19.
[103] *Ib.* 14. [104] *Ib.* 6. [105] *Ib.* 32. [106] *Ib.* 35.

ures of common thought and fancy stored up for days of future greatness in the despised popular tale and legend, in books like *Fortunatus* or *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Our Lord's Childhood* or *The Seven Wise Masters*, in almanacs and dream-books, in trade-rules and sibylline prophecies.

"As in the fields there rises stalk by stalk, as in the pasture blade presses blade, as under the ground root is entwined with root, nature for ever tirelessly repeating the same old story that yet is always new,—thus speaks to us the spirit of these books. In the so-called higher literature we see one year after another, like Saturnus, devour its own offspring, the children of a moment; but *these* books live an indestructible, immortal life. Century after century, they have addressed themselves to hundreds of thousands of hearers, a limitless audience; never growing old, always returning, always welcome, always equally entertaining, refreshing, instructive. Thus they form, as it were, the primitive stock of all literature, the substance of its life, the framework of its bodily existence."[107]

To be sure, they belong primarily to the lower classes of the people, to the rude and uneducated. But on that very account they have preserved more firmly what is in true accord with the national taste, what is nutritious and helpful for all. They are truly bread for the people. They lead us back to the mysterious origins of our race; they connect us with the wisdom of ancient India, with the culture of Greece and Rome; they contain an echo of the heroic deeds of our Germanic ancestors; they are a reflex of times when learning and life were not so far apart as they are to-day. We recognise in them the German people "such as the ancient painters have portrayed it; simple, quiet, calm, reserved, honest, knowing little of sensuous passion, all the more susceptible to higher incentives."[108] But we also feel the presence of "a hale and lusty spirit, such as impels the deer to roam through the thicket. There is nothing tame, domesticated, trained, in them; all as if grown in the wild forest, born in the

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[107] *Die teutschen Volksbücher* (1807) *p.* 1 f.

[108] *Ib.* 8.

shade of the oak, brought up in mountain glens, free and bold sweeping over the hillsides, yet from time to time confidingly descending to the abodes of men and bringing word of the free life without."[109] Shame upon the learned and cultivated of this age who like haughty prodigals have turned away from this old homestead of popular tradition, squandering their part of the common inheritance in fashionable dissipation! and all hail to the poor and the lowly who have cherished and preserved it, so that we now must turn to them, if a truly popular life is to be revived, if we are to know once more what it is to feel, to think, to dream, not as individuals, but as a united nation![110]

And now at last there appeared the two men in whom the very genius of the German people seemed to have been reincarnated, the men whose life-work will for ever stand as the ripest scientific result of this whole turning back of the German mind from aristocratic culture and cosmopolitanism to national custom and home tradition: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm,—Jacob (1785–1863) the greater scholar of the brothers, the creator of historical grammar, the founder of the science of Teutonic mythology, the prime mover in the colossal undertaking of a national dictionary; Wilhelm (1786–1859) the greater writer of the two, the investigator of Germanic hero-saga and folk-lore, the classic interpreter of mediæval poetry, the principal gleaner and the literary artist of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen.*

The brothers Grimm.

Both men possessed a touching simplicity of heart and a wonderful affinity with all that belongs to the native soil. When Wilhelm as a man of forty, at the height of his literary productivity, revisits the scene of his youth, a quiet little Hessian village, he has the church opened for him where his grandfather, for seven and forty years pastor of

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[109] *Die teutschen Volksbücher* (1807) *p.* 24 f. [110] Cf. *ib.* 303 ff.

the town, would Sunday after Sunday pass by his wife's grave on his way to the pulpit, and he is seized with an inexpressible longing for this peaceful, thoughtful, and joyous past in which he now seems to walk about as a departed spirit.[111] And many similar traits might be related of Jacob: how, after their removal from Cassel to Göttingen, a distance of some fifty miles, he found a comfort for his homesickness in the thought that the same stars at least shone over both places;[112] or how, during an illness of Wilhelm's, he suddenly broke down in his lecture and with a faltering voice excused himself: "My brother is so sick."[113]

And these men whose hearts were so tender and whose life was so gentle, were at the same time characters of unimpeachable rectitude and unbending firmness, and wherever there was a principle of public morality or of scientific veracity at stake, the brothers Grimm were sure to be found champions of the right. Of Wilhelm can be said with equal justice what Jacob said of himself when his protest against the abrogation of the Hanoverian constitution had brought the edict of banishment upon his head[114]: "I never attract the attention of the ruling powers until they force me to bear away the fire of my hearth and kindle it elsewhere. This independence has steeled my soul; it resists insinuations which would stain the purity of my consciousness." And Wilhelm characterized not only his own principles of scientific research, but also those of Jacob, when he said[115]: "Exact and careful monographs have always excited my admiration. Such contributions to science may be small in volume, but their influence is incalculable and their value is imperishable. Spirit, breadth

[111] Cf. W. Grimm's *Selbstbiographie* in his *Kleinere Schriften* I, 7 f.
[112] Cf. J. Grimm's *Selbstbiographie* in his *Kleinere Schr.* I, 17.
[113] Cf. W. Scherer, *Jacob Grimm p.* 234.
[114] *Ueber meine Entlassung; Kl. Schr.* I, 26.
[115] *Selbstbiogr.; l. c.* 6.

of mind, sympathy with the highest problems of life, if they are there, will manifest themselves even in such a work. I would rather study and perceive the universal in the particular; and the knowledge which is gained in this way seems to me more certain and fruitful than that which is found in the opposite manner. By the latter method, it is so easy to put aside as useless the very phenomenon in which life has expressed itself most fully, and to give way to speculations which may intoxicate but which do not truly satisfy and nourish."

These were the men to lead the work begun by Herder, the rediscovery and the rehabilitation of whatever is truly popular and national in literature, to its climax. These were the men to make the products of common fancy which in the times of servitude and misery had been relegated to the lower strata of society, again the common property of the nation.

One needs only to compare the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812) with the collections of German fairy-tales by men like Musäus [116] or Tieck [117] to realize how different from all previous efforts, how essentially new and epoch-making was the way in which the brothers Grimm approached these long-forgotten treasures of the popular imagination. Musäus, the cultivated rationalist, the disciple of Wieland, however graceful his style, however successful his imitation of the naïve, cannot make us forget that after all he stoops to the children of the people as to inferior beings. Tieck, although by no means insensible to the simple charm of the genuine fairy-tale, destroys its pure effect by putting side by side with it extravagant and sensational inventions of his own. The brothers Grimm have nothing more at heart than to preserve the popular tradition unalloyed by individual caprice; they listen to it as one listens to the silence

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[116] *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (1782–85); cf. *DNL.* LVII, 155 ff.

[117] Cf. *supra p.* 453 f.

of the forest, awed by its mystery, amazed by its wealth of sound. Its presence makes them feel all the more clearly the insufficiency and shallowness of artificial culture, the immorality of ephemeral fashions; it makes them see the abiding traits of national character; it makes them bow before the majesty of popular innocence.

"There lives in these tales," thus Wilhelm Grimm expresses his own feeling for them,[118] "there lives in these tales the same purity which makes children seem so wonderful and so blessed to us; they have, as it were, the same bluish-white, spotless, lustrous eyes, which are full-grown while the limbs are still feeble and unsuited for the work of life. The sphere of this world is limited: kings, princes, faithful servants, honest craftsmen, above all fishermen, millers, charcoal-burners and shepherds, all the folk who live nearest to nature, appear in it; what lies beyond is strange and unknown. As in the myths which tell of a golden age, all nature is alive; sun, moon, and stars are accessible, bestow gifts or may perhaps even be woven in garments; in the mountains, dwarfs are digging for precious metals, in the sea there sleep the water-sprites; birds, plants, and stones talk and express their sympathy; even blood calls and speaks out. This innocent familiarity of the greatest and the smallest has an inexpressible sweetness, and we, for our part, would rather listen to the conversation between the stars and a poor child lost in the forest than to the music of the spheres. All that is beautiful, is golden and strewn with pearls; even golden people are to be found; the evil, on the other hand, is a dark power, a monstrous, man-eating giant. And yet it is overcome, for a good woman comes forward who knows how to avert the danger—and thus this epic always ends by opening up an endless joy."

And so they came forward again, all those lovely and artless creatures whom the deceit of the learned and the ignorance of the powerful had forced to seek shelter in the huts of the peasants and artisans. And Hänsel and Gretel, little Red Riding Hood, Briar-rose, Schneewittchen, and Tom Thumb took their place by the side of Siegfried and Roland, of Till Eulenspiegel and the figures of the Volks-

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118 Preface to the *Märchen;* W. Grimm, *Kl. Schr.* I, 322 f.

lied, as witnesses of a past when there still existed a German nation, and as prophets of a future, when this nation was to rise again in ancient splendour.

It was on October 18, 1812, that Wilhelm Grimm wrote the words just quoted. Exactly twelve months later the battle of Leipzig was fought.[119]

3. The New Poetry and the National Uprising.

Of the intellectual agencies of the eighteenth century which at the beginning of the nineteenth co-operated to bring about the regeneration of the German people we have thus far considered two. We have seen how Kant's moral law developed into the pantheism of Schleiermacher and the socialism of Fichte. We have seen how Herder's idea of national individuality gave rise to a revival of Catholicism and all that is implied by popular tradition. The question remains: who were the successors of Schiller and Goethe? what poets can be said to have held up after them, in a new form, the ideal of complete humanity?

No one could have felt more clearly than either Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) or Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862) the gulf which separated them from the two greatest poets of modern times. Kleist's despairing outcry[120]: "Hell gave me my half-talents, heaven bestows a whole talent or none," reveals the tragedy of a life which was consumed in the ever-renewed and ever-hopeless struggle to rival the dramatic art of Schiller; while the modest muse of Uhland dared not even think of herself

Kleist and Uhland.

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[119] It is a noteworthy fact that J. Grimm in his own copy of the *Märchen* commented on this coincidence, by adding to the date of the preface ("Cassel, am 18. October 1812") the marginal note: "Gerade ein Jahr vor der Leipziger Schlacht." W. Grimm, *Kl. Schr.* I, 328.

[120] Cf. A. Koberstein, *H. von Kleist's Briefe an s. Schwester Ulrike*; letter of Oct. 5, 1803.

in company with the Olympian of Weimar.[121] And yet it is to these two men that we must turn if we wish to understand how the work of Schiller and Goethe lived on in the midst of younger generations, how it entered into the development of Romanticism, how it helped to bring on the day of liberty and greatness.

Kleist's place in Romantic literature.

What Goethe has said[122] of Heinrich von Kleist, that "he seemed to him like a human form beautifully planned by nature, but infected with an incurable disease," while it clearly states the tragic conflict of the poet's life, fails to do justice to the heroic efforts made by him to rise superior to this conflict,—efforts to which German literature owes some of its most stirring and pathetic characters. More deeply than most of his contemporaries did Kleist feel the agony of an age which saw the creation of centuries sink into the dust; more intensely than most did he suffer the pangs of the search for a new heaven and a new earth; more hopelessly than most did he lose himself in the labyrinthine maze of Romantic speculation and self-reflection; and more clearly than any has he shown the way leading out of it.

Erratic flights.

Disgusted with the humdrum of military drill to which as a lieutenant in the Prussian army he sees himself condemned, he flees to books to find freedom and life. He studies the Kantian philosophy. But the same thought which to a Fichte or a Schleiermacher brought the assurance of the essential spirituality of all things plunges Kleist into the depths of despair. "If all men," he writes,[123] "had green glasses for eyes, they would be compelled to think that all objects were green; and

[121] Cf. the homage paid by him to Goethe in the poems *Münstersage* and *Märchen*; Uhland, *Gedichte u. Dramen* II, 126. 240.

[122] Cf. Julian Schmidt in the introduction to Kleist's *Gesammelte Schr.* I, 11.

[123] Cf. K. Biedermann, *H. v. Kleist's Briefe an s. Braut*; letter of March 22, 1801.

they would never be able to decide whether the eye showed them things as they are or whether it did not add something which does not belong to the things but to the eye. Thus it is with the intellect. We cannot decide whether that which we call truth is really truth, or whether it only seems so to us.—Ever since this conviction has taken hold of my mind, I have not touched a book. I have walked up and down in my room, I have sat down by the open window, I have run out into the open air; I have been driven by an inner restlessness into taverns and coffee-houses; I have, to distract myself, visited theatres and concerts; I have even, in order to dull my feelings, committed some folly; and yet the only thought which, in all this outer tumult, rose up before my feverish soul was this: 'Thy only, thy highest ideal is gone.'" Haunted by these dreadful visions he enters on a life of aimless wanderings through Germany, France, Switzerland. For a time he dreams of buying a farm in the native land of Rousseau, of becoming a free tiller of the soil. This plan fails through the misgivings of his fiancée as to its practicability. Without hesitation Kleist breaks his engagement, and now poetry is to give him the consolation and the harmony with himself which neither knowledge nor life could offer. He has conceived a gigantic tragedy, a tragedy which is to combine the dramatic art of Æschylus and Shakspere, which is to reveal the whole grandeur of man's battle with fate. But what a distance between the conception and the completion; what a world of torment and anxiety, of doubt and self-condemnation! It is in vain that sympathetic friends try to inspire him with courage; in vain that the aged Wieland, after having heard a few scenes from *Robert Guiscard* (the name of the tragedy), pronounces[124] Kleist the genius destined "to fill the gap in the development of the German drama

[124] Cf. Jul. Schmidt, *l. c.* I, 39. The ten scenes of this drama which have come down to us (Kleist's *Sämmtl. Werke* ed. Muncker III, 197 ff.) fully justify this opinion of Wieland's.

which even Schiller and Goethe have not yet filled." In October, 1803, two years after the plan of the tragedy had first taken form in his mind, he writes to his sister from the north of France[125]:

"What I am going to tell you may perhaps cost you your life; but I must, I must do it. I have perused again, rejected, and burned my work; and now the end has come. Heaven denies me fame, the greatest of earthly goods; like a capricious child I throw down before it all the rest. I cannot show myself worthy of thy friendship, and without thy friendship I cannot live: I choose death. Be calm, exalted one! I shall die the beautiful death of battle. I have left the capital of this country, I have wandered to its northern coast, I shall enter the French service; soon the army will embark for England, the ruin of us all is lurking over the sea, I exult in the prospect of the glorious grave. Thou, beloved, shalt be my last thought."

Inner recovery.

Thus far Kleist has been absorbed in himself, engaged exclusively in the cultivation of his own nature. Society, state, fatherland do not exist for him. He contemplates his own feelings, he dissects his own thoughts; thereby losing the very thing which he is so ravenously craving: the belief in himself, the power of artistic creation, the moral equipoise of his being. But now his country is plunged into the disaster of 1806, the very existence of the German people is endangered; and now at last he recovers—for a time at least—from his self-destructive broodings, he forgets himself, he finds the true sources of his strength, he becomes a poet.

Not that the national catastrophe at once wrung from Kleist an outcry of patriotic feeling. Only the end of the year 1808 was to see the birth of the *Hermannsschlacht.* Yet every one of the four remarkable works which were finished in the two years preceding it—*Der zerbrochene Krug* (1806), *Penthesilea*, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, *Michael*

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[125] Koberstein *l. c.;* letter of Oct. 26.

Kohlhaas (1808),[126]—reflects in its own way the process of inner recovery and reconstruction, through which in this very time of outward humiliation and defeat the German nation was to pass.

Realism.

It is as though the ideal of complete humanity which inspired the great classic poets had here, under the stress of national misery, been welded into a form, less beautiful to be sure, but more compact and lifelike. Instead of the mellow transparency of marble we have the sharp ruggedness of bronze. We feel: these figures have been hardened in the fire; they are the result of emotions so fierce, so violent, so volcanic as are experienced only by men who have felt the very soil give way under their feet, who have lived through a break-down of their whole spiritual existence.

Der zerbrochene Krug.

This it is which gives such a poignancy and raciness even to the stout humour of Dutch village life as displayed in *Der zerbrochene Krug*. Like a Teniers or a Terburg, Kleist fairly revels, in this inimitable little play, in the faithful reproduction of the ordinary and the commonplace.[127] What an atmosphere of every-day reality is spread over it! How squarely they stand before us, this slovenly and slothful justice of the peace with his club foot, his blackened eye, and his big bald head; this sleek, thin, officious clerk, constantly on the alert for an opportunity to thrust himself into the position of his chief; this quarrelsome and loquacious Frau Marthe, not hesitating to drag the good name of her daughter into the court-room if there is a chance of recovering damages for a broken jar;

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[126] A full analysis of all of Kleist's works in O. Brahm, *Heinrich von Kleist*. At the end of Brahm's book there is a complete Kleist bibliography up to 1884. Of all the critics of Kleist none seems to me to have entered as deeply into Kleist's character as H. v. Treitschke; *Historische u. Politische Aufsätze* II.

[127] Tieck seems to have been the first to observe this resemblance between Kleist and the old Dutch masters. Cf. Jul. Schmidt *l. c.* 84.

and, in pleasant contrast with all these, this sturdy peasant-lad and his sweetheart, whose love, though sorely tried, is proven to be so genuine and true! Yet after all, Kleist's realism is something very different from the realism of the old Dutch genre-painters. It entirely lacks their restfulness and serenity, there is something fierce and breathless in it, there is burning under its surface a violent hatred of sham and deceit, a grim desire to unmask the illusions of life. A mere nothing, a broken pot, disturbs the peace of the community, severs family ties, and threatens the happiness of lovers. And when the law is called upon to settle matters, it appears that the judge himself is the real sinner, his very examination of the litigating parties reveals the fact that he has made an attempt against the honour of one of them, and the trial ends with his ignominious flight from the court-room.—Such is the world we live in; these are the men from whom we expect justice!

Penthesilea.

What in *Der zerbrochene Krug* we feel as a latent force only—the heartburnings of a man who carries within him the image of a perfect world unrealized—breaks forth in *Penthesilea* with unbridled and irresistible impetuosity. Here for the first time Kleist finds a poetic symbol for his innermost being, here for the first time we see him in his full heroic stature. It is doubtful whether in the whole range of literature there is to be found another work breathing such elemental, nay, chaotic passion, as does this marvellous poem, in which the days of centaur struggles and bacchantic rage seem to have been revived. What a strange, fabulous region it is into which we are led! This realm of the Amazons with its barbarous traditions of husband-slaughter and husband-rape; this holy ordinance compelling the maiden to seek and to vanquish her lover on the field of battle; these gorgeous paraphernalia of war surrounded by which Penthesilea herself sets out to subdue the beloved Achilles—what is all this to us? How little of human interest it seems to have! Thus we think, until we hear this

Penthesilea speak; until we become aware that this fabulous queen of the Amazons is in reality Kleist's own soul, a soul inspired with titanic daring, driven by superhuman desire, bent on conquering eternity. When the conviction first dawned upon Kleist that the whole of truth is beyond human reach, all life henceforth seemed worthless to him. When Penthesilea instead of vanquishing the beloved hero is overcome by him, even his love is hateful to her. The ideal which she cannot fully and without reserve make hers she must destroy. The god in her having been killed, the beast awakes. And thus, immediately after that enchanting scene [128] where the lovers for the first time and the last have been revelling in mutual surrender and delight, she falls like a tigress upon the unsuspecting and weaponless man; with the voluptuousness of despair, she sends the arrow through his breast; she lets her hounds loose upon him as he dies, and together with the hounds she tears his limbs and drinks his blood; until at last, brought back to her senses, and realizing what she has done, she sinks into the arms of death,—a character so atrocious and so ravishing, so monstrous and so divine, so miraculous and so true, as no other poet ever has created.

Das Käthchen von Heilbronn and *Michael Kohlhaas* are both variations of the same theme struck in *Penthesilea*: the theme of unconditional, unfaltering, unquestioning obedience to the promptings of the inner voice. But they are variations of a most pronounced originality. In Käthchen it is the absolute trust of a child following instinctively and as if under hypnotic influence the spell of a superior personality. In Kohlhaas it is the imperturbable self-respect of a man who would plunge the whole world into ruin rather than allow the intruder upon his own lawful right to go unpunished.

Käthchen's character may be summed up in the words of

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128 *Penthesilea Sc.* 15; *Werke* ed. Muncker II, 168 ff.

Das Käthchen von Heilbronn.

her father, the honest sword-smith of Heilbronn[129]: "Sound of body and soul like the first-born men; a child after God's own heart, rising like a straight column of frankincense and juniper in the quiet evening sky of my life. A being more tender or dear you could not imagine, even though you were to see the dear little angels peeping with their clear eyes from the clouds under God's own hands and feet. As she passed along the street in her homely attire, the straw hat on her head shining with yellow lacquer, her little bodice of black velvet hung with slender little silver chains about her breast, there would run a whisper from window to window: 'Look! our Käthchen of Heilbronn!'—our Käthchen of Heilbronn, sirs, as though the sky of Suabia had begotten her and the town lying under it, impregnated by its kiss, had brought her forth." And her conduct since that portentous day when she first saw the man who was to enslave her soul, stands out with equal clearness from the anguish of the father who has lost his child[130]: "Since that day she follows him in blind devotion from place to place, led by the light of his face which has been wound like a chord five-stranded round her soul; with naked feet exposed to every pebble, the short little skirt that covers her hips fluttering in the wind, nothing but a straw hat to protect her face from the rage of the elements. Wherever his foot turns in the course of his adventures, through misty glens, through deserts scorched by the midday sun, through the night of impervious forests: like a dog on the scent of his master, she paces after him; and she who was accustomed to rest on soft cushions, who felt the smallest little knot in the threads of the bed-linen—she now lies down, like a serving-woman, in his stables and goes to sleep, faint with fatigue, upon the straw which is trampled upon by his proud steeds."

How widely apart from all this and yet how nearly related

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[129] *D. Käthchen v. Heilbr.* I, 1 : *l. c.* 227. [130] *Ib.* 231.

is Michael Kohlhaas, the central figure of that powerful story of the sixteenth century in which it seems as though the spirit of revenge which soon was to unite the German peoples in the universal uprising against the oppressor of Europe, was for the first time lifting its head! Here, if anywhere, Kleist is a master in the art of crowding a world of passion into the most concise, succinct, and seemingly objective narrative. Kohlhaas becomes a rebel and a criminal because he cannot consent to the prostitution of justice. This commonplace horse-dealer, this contented, well-to-do citizen, this plain practical man of the people, is at bottom a stalwart idealist. It is his belief in the inevitable victory of right which in the beginning of his trouble with the Baron von Tronka makes him go to the utmost length of forbearance. Without the slightest provocation on his part, some of his horses are detained by the baron: Kohlhaas submits to it as to one of those unpleasant necessities which are a part of the "defective order of this world."[131] Having established the groundlessness of the detention, he reclaims the horses, only to find that through overwork, starvation, and wanton ill-treatment they have been well-nigh ruined, while his groom on protesting against such an outrage has been nearly beaten to death. Even now Kohlhaas controls himself. He carefully weighs all possibilities, and only when he has fully convinced himself that there is no other way of redress does he decide to invoke the law in his behalf. But now there happens the unheard of, the incredible: the law itself sides with the law-breaker! even the highest court of the land rejects Kohlhaas's complaint as irrelevant and futile! It is superb to see how the long-suppressed impulse of vindicating the right with his own hand now flames up in this quiet and self-possessed North German with irrepressible and fatal power. Through all his wrath and indignation at "seeing the world in such a pro-

Michael Kohlhaas.

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[131] Cf. *Werke* IV, 13.

digious disorder" there flashes a feeling of inward satisfaction that "his own mind has at last been set right."[132] His faithful wife having made a last effort to redress his wrongs, and having died while engaged in it, he arranges her funeral with all the solemnity and deliberateness of one who is about to settle his account with this world. (What a picture! this silent man, his youngest child on his arm, standing by and watching, as they are digging her grave!) He sells all his property except his horses and his arms; he puts his children in the care of relatives; once more he throws himself down in the deserted house before the bed of the departed one:—and then he rises "for the business of revenge."[133] And when, after years of murder and destruction, after the whole country has been made to feel all the terrors of a civil war, the horses are at last restored to him in good condition and the baron is sentenced to prison, Kohlhaas willingly suffers the fate of a rebel, and lays his head on the block with the joyful consciousness that justice has been done.

Die Hermannsschlacht.

While Kleist was putting the finishing touches to this thrilling tale of popular rebellion, there had been heard the first mutterings of the European revolt against Napoleonic usurpation. The Spanish people had risen, and from the battle fields of Saragossa and Baylen there came a mighty voice calling upon the German people to do likewise. Kleist's response to this call was his *Hermannsschlacht*, the glorification of the first great rising of Germanic yeoman against foreign tyranny.

Wherever there is a nation down-trodden and enslaved, wherever the blood of the innocent cries to heaven, whereever there are souls thirsting for a day of retaliation, this mighty song of judgment will be heard. Here again Kleist proves himself the man of extremes; here again his passion is all the more unscrupulous and unreflecting, because it has struggled through self-introspection and doubt. The whole

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[132] *Werke* IV, 22. [133] *Ib.* 28.

drama is like one long-drawn breath of exultant joy that now, at last, the time of theorizing and considering is over, that the hour of action, of relentless, pitiless action has come.

In the beginning, Hermann himself is the only one who clearly recognises this hour. He recognises it, because among a multitude of half-hearted and selfish wiseacres he alone fights, not for his life, not for his property, but for an idea. He is the embodiment of the spirit which Fichte in his *Addresses to the German Nation* had endeavoured to evoke, the spirit of absolute, not to say fanatical, surrender to the common cause. To free Germany from the foreign yoke—this is the consuming, the maddening passion of his life. To accomplish this, he is ready to sacrifice everything and every one, to break every faith, to violate every principle.[134] In order to lull Ventidius, the Roman legate, into a feeling of complete security, he encourages his frivolous advances to his own wife Thusnelda. He risks the life of his own children by sending them as hostages to Marbod. He opens his own territory to the spoliations of the hostile army. He himself incites the Roman soldiery to outrages against his people. On hearing of the noble deed of the Roman centurion who in the sacking of a Cheruscan village has saved a child from the flames, he wildly exclaims[135]:

> Er sei verflucht, wenn er mir das gethan!
> Er hat auf einen Augenblick
> Mein Herz veruntreut, zum Verräter
> An Deutschlands grosser Sache mich gemacht!
> Ich *will* die höhnische Dämonenbrut nicht lieben!
> So lang sie in Germanien trotzt,
> Ist Hass mein Amt, und meine Tugend Rache!

The gradual spreading of this spirit of unconditional, passionate devotion to the national cause, the slow but irresistible surging on of this wave of collective wrath, until at last it sweeps over and bears away the whole structure of

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[134] Cf. Brahm *l. c.* 292 f. [135] *Hermannsschl.* IV, 9; *Werke* III, 71.

Roman perfidy and despotism—this forms the dominating action of the drama ; this is brought out, above all, in the way in which Thusnelda becomes an avenger of her country's honour.

Thusnelda—Thuschen, as Hermann loves to call her—is a figure such as only Kleist could create : all childlike instinct, all faith, all womanliness, a being born to be loved,—

> So was ein Deutscher lieben nennt,
> Mit Ehrfurcht und mit Sehnsucht—[136]

and at the same time a fierce, revengeful, Penthesilea-like barbarian. The simple-minded woman has taken the attentions of Ventidius, the gallant Roman, seriously. She reproaches herself for not having undeceived him at once, and when Hermann makes fun of these scruples, her resentment clearly shows that her feminine vanity has not remained untouched by the flatteries of the shallow diplomat[137]:

> Dich macht, ich seh', dein Römerhass ganz blind.
> Weil als dämonenartig dir
> Das Ganz' erscheint, so kannst du dir
> Als sittlich nicht den Einzelnen gedenken.

Hermann drops the subject and waits for a better opportunity to open her eyes. One of the symptoms which to Thusnelda showed the depth of Ventidius's passion for her was that he managed furtively to cut off a lock of her golden hair. To this incident Hermann recurs the very day when he and Thusnelda, sitting under the oak tree, are expecting the triumphal entry of the Roman army into Teutoburg.[138]

"Well, Thuschen, how you *will* look after these Romans have shaved your head bald as a rat!"

"The Romans? What?"

Hermann. Ja, was zum Henker, denkst du?
Die röm'schen Damen müssen doch,
Wenn sie sich schmücken, hübsche Haare haben?
Thusnelda. Nun, haben denn die röm'schen Damen keine?

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[136] *Hermannsschl.* II, 8; *l. c.* 29.
[137] *Ib.* 30. [138] Cf. for the following III, 3; *l. c.* 41 ff.

Herm. Nein, sag' ich! Schwarze! Schwarz und fett, wie Hexen!
Nicht hübsche, trock'ne, gold'ne, so wie du!
Thusn. Wohlan! so mögen sie! Der trift'ge Grund!
Wenn sie mit hübschen nicht begabt,
So mögen sie mit schmutz'gen sich behelfen!
Herm. So! In der That! Da sollen die Kohorten
Umsonst wohl über'n Rhein gekommen sein?
Thusn. Wer? Die Kohorten?
Herm. Ja, die Varus führt.
Thusn. (*lacht*). Das muss ich sagen! Der wird doch
Um meiner Haare nicht gekommen sein?
Herm. Was? Allerdings! Bei unsrer grossen Hertha!
Hat dir Ventidius das noch nicht gesagt?

And now he goes on in the same grimly jocose manner, telling her how the Roman soldiers fall upon German women, cut their hair and break their teeth, in order that the fine ladies in Rome be well supplied with stolen charms; while Thusnelda listens laughing, wondering, gasping, until she finally breaks out:

Thusn. Bei allen Rachegöttern! allen Furien!
Bei allem was die Hölle finster macht!
Mit welchem Recht, wenn dem so ist,
Vom Kopf uns aber nehmen sie sie weg?
Herm. Ich weiss nicht, Thuschen, wie du heut' dich stellst.
Steht August nicht mit den Kohorten
In allen Ländern siegreich aufgepflanzt?
Für wen erschaffen ward die Welt als Rom?
Nimmt August nicht dem Elefanten
Das Elfenbein, das Oel der Bisamkatze,
Dem Pantertier das Fell, dem Wurm die Seide?
Was soll der Deutsche hier zum voraus haben?

And at last she learns that the lock of her own hair stolen by Ventidius was not a symbol of his love, is not being worn by him nearest to his heart, but has been sent to the empress as an outlandish curiosity. And now her wrath knows no bounds. She implores Hermann to abandon Ventidius to her vengeance, she lures the traitor to a secret rendezvous, and commits him herself to the em-

braces of a wild bear.—In the whole of *William Tell* there is no episode which in passionate intensity and truthfulness could be compared with these Thusnelda scenes.

Katechismus der Deutschen.

In the spring of 1809 it seemed as though Kleist was no longer to be alone in his dreams of national revenge, as though the hour of the German rising of which he had sung in *Die Hermannsschlacht* had come indeed. Austria declared war upon France, and all over Germany this declaration was greeted as the dawn of a new epoch. The Austrian army rejoiced at the chance of blotting out the memory of Austerlitz; the Tirolese peasants followed the example of the Spanish insurgents; and although Prussia still kept neutral, yet here also the long-suppressed popular wrath found a voice in the enthusiasm aroused by Schill's glorious, though foolhardy, expedition. Kleist could not be inactive in this universal awakening. He hastened to the scene of war itself, and here he wrote those flaming manifestoes in which now with the massive energy of Fichtean grandiloquence,[139] now with the simplicity and incisiveness of a popular pamphleteer, he repeats again and again the one thing needful: a common heart and a common will. Two chapters of the *Catechism for Germans*[140] will be sufficient to illustrate the spirit of these heart-stirring effusions.

"*Chapter* 2. *On the Love of Country.* Q.: Thou lovest thy fatherland, my son, dost thou not? A.: Yes, my father, I do. Q.: Why dost thou love it? A.: Because it is my fatherland. Q.: Thou meanest, because God has blessed it with abundant fruit, because it is adorned with beautiful works of art, because heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, to whose names there is no end, have magnified it? A.: No, father: thou misleadest me. Q.: I mislead thee? A.: For Rome and Egypt, as thou hast

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[139] Cf. especially the manifesto *Was gilt es in diesem Kriege? Werke* IV, 278 ff.

[140] *Werke* IV, 265 ff.

taught me, are much more richly blest than Germany with fruit and beautiful works of art and whatever is great and delightful. Yet, if it were thy son's fate to live in either of these countries, he would feel sad and never would love it as he loves Germany. Q.: Why then dost thou love Germany? A.: My father, I have told thee already. Q.: Thou hast told me? A.: Because it is my fatherland.—*Chapter* 7. *On the Admiration of Napoleon.* Q.: What kind of a man dost thou consider Napoleon, the Corsican, the all-famous emperor of the French? A.: My father, pardon me, thou hast asked me that already. Q.: Say it once more, in the words which I have taught thee! A.: A detestable man, the beginning of all evil and the end of all good; a sinner, to denounce whom men have no language and the angels of doomsday have no breath. Q.: Didst thou ever see him? A.: Never, my father. Q.: How art thou to imagine him to thyself? A.: As the ghost of a parricide, risen from hell, sneaking about in the temple of Nature and trying to shake the columns that bear it. Q.: When hast thou repeated this to thyself? A.: Last night when I went to bed, and this morning when I rose. Q.: And when wilt thou repeat it again? A.: To-night when I go to bed, and to-morrow when I rise. Q.: And yet, they say, he has many virtues. The business of subduing the world, they say, he manages with shrewdness, agility, and boldness; and especially on the day of battle, they say, he is a great leader. A.: Yes, my father, so they say. Q.: Dost thou not think that for these qualities he deserves admiration? A.: Thou jestest, my father. Q.: Why not? A.: That would be as cowardly as though I were to admire the athletic power of a man in the moment in which he throws me into the mud and tramples upon my face. Q.: Who, then, among the Germans may admire him? A.: The generals, perhaps, and they who know the art of war. Q.: And even these, when only may they do it? A.: When he is crushed."

What poet has ever sung more sublimely of the great concerns of human life, tradition, home, freedom, right, than Kleist in this homely and unpretentious *Catechism*?

Der Prinz von Homburg.

The battle of Wagram destroyed at one stroke all the exultant hopes with which the Austrian war had been begun. The future of Germany seemed darker than ever, the foreign yoke seemed fastened upon it indissolubly and for all time. Once more

Kleist's ideals had been shattered. For a time he seems to have brooded over a mad design of assassinating Napoleon. At last he returned weary and broken to his Prussian home, from which since 1807 he had been absent. Here meanwhile a momentous change had taken place. The Prussia of 1806 was dead, and a new Prussia, the Prussia of Stein, of Fichte, of Schleiermacher had arisen. Kleist saw before him a people such as the *Addresses to the German Nation* had aimed to create, a people which seemed the embodiment of noblest service and devotion to common duty, a people ready to sacrifice everything in order to regain a dignified national existence. The sight of this people wrung from Kleist his last work and his sanest, the drama which has given to the German stage the finest type of military discipline, which has surrounded the Brandenburg of the great Elector with the halo of immortal poetry: *Der Prinz von Homburg* (1810).

The history of literature knows of no other poetic production which, born from an equally deep individual experience, has at the same time in a more emphatic manner manifested in itself the concentrated thought of a whole epoch than does this wonderful poem. No other figure of Kleist's imagination bears a more striking resemblance to Kleist himself than this wayward dreamer who under the stress of necessity becomes a man; and no other figure is a finer type of the return of Romanticism from capricious self-indulgence and æsthetic revelry to the simple and all-important duties of common life.

An indescribable charm lies over those first scenes of the drama where the young hero merged into the sweet illusion of a moonlit summer-night is carried away by the vision of the ideals that swell his heart: the laurel wreath of fame; the favour of his lord, the Elector; the love of the princess Natalie. Yet, irresistible as this unalloyed and boyish enthusiast is, we feel at once that he lacks the steady purpose and self-mastery which transforms genius into cha-

racter. His country is in the most pressing danger, the Swedes have swept over the larger part of Brandenburg and are threatening Berlin, it is the eve of a decisive battle. The prince of Homburg seems to feel nothing of all this. Distracted and absent-minded, he attends the meeting of the generals at which the orders for the next day are issued. Mechanically and listlessly he receives his own order not to advance until the enemy is routed. What is the plan of battle to him? He still sees Natalie holding out to him the laurel-wreath adorned with the Elector's golden chain, he still seems to follow her while she retreats, he again seems to grasp her arm, and again to see the vision fade. In this frame of mind he enters the battle. It is intolerable to him to be condemned to wait. Against his orders, against the protests of his officers, he advances with his squadrons at the very height of the combat, and thereby decides the victory. A rumour spreads that the Elector himself has fallen from his horse. The victorious general feels himself the head of the whole army, of the whole state; and at this very moment he is made to feel that Natalie is his. Beside himself, frenzied with passionate elation, he exclaims[141]:

> O Caesar Divus!
> Die Leiter setz ich an, an deinen Stern!

But the Elector has not fallen in the battle. He lives, and he is determined to chastise the disobedient general. In him Kleist has created the ideal type of a Hohenzollern ruler, a figure which suggests the venerable features of the old emperor William. Not a trace of wilfulness, of arrogance in him. A simple, upright man; kind, yet austere; gentle in his feelings, but chary of utterance. A prince who loves a frank, manly word, whose heart is with his subjects, a true father of his people, yet stern as the law itself against the violator of the law. He is unwilling to

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[141] *Prinz v. Homb.* II, 8; *Werke* III, 147.

accept victory from a lawless chance: the prince of Homburg is court-martialled and sentenced to death.

Once again does Kleist make his hero go to the extreme of passionate emotion. The same man who with reckless bravery had plunged into the thick of battle, loses all self-respect and self-control at the thought of the grave. He begs for his life, he whines for pity, he is willing to renounce Natalie if only he can save his own miserable existence. And he rises from this self-degradation only when the Elector, moved by the pitiful spectacle, calls upon the prince himself to judge his own transgression: if he himself considers the verdict unjust he is to be free. Now at last Homburg recovers his moral equilibrium, now at last he becomes fully himself. He submits to the law, he acknowledges his guilt, he asks for death, he exults in the consciousness of giving himself as a sacrifice to eternal order [142]:

> Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein!
> Du strahlst mir durch die Binde meiner Augen
> Mit Glanz der tausendfachen Sonne zu,—

and now he is worthy to be pardoned. The whole has prevailed over the individual. Romanticism has returned to the classic ideal.

It was not given to Kleist himself to reach the moral harmony for which nearly all of his heroes strive and which the prince of Homburg so gloriously attains. Misjudged by his time, neglected by his friends, at last rejected even by those dearest to him, he turned away from this world in gloom and despair, he did not see the day of glory. But he, too, no less than the thousands who died on the fields of Leipzig and Waterloo, must be numbered among the martyrs for freedom and right.[143]

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[142] *Prinz von Homb.* V, 10; *l. c.* 194.

[143] Never has a man of genius suffered such bitter disappointment and ignominy as Heinrich von Kleist. Of his principal works, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* was the only one which received even so much as a respectful hearing. *Der zerbrochene Krug* was a complete

One cannot help feeling a certain disenchantment when one turns from Heinrich von Kleist to a man who in so many ways was his opposite: Ludwig Uhland.[144] There, the passionate struggles of a Titan; here, the quiet labour of a conscientious artist. There, a fiery enthusiast, consumed by the desire to snatch the crown of glory from the head of the immortals[145]; here, a simple man of the people, knowing of no greater joy than to stand by his window and listen to carousing students singing his own songs. There, a mind brooding over the deepest problems, craving for the highest ideals; convulsive efforts, sudden outbursts of the soul; and

Contrast and affinity between Kleist and Uhland.

failure on the Weimar stage. *Penthesilea* was found so shocking that its publisher, Cotta, was not even willing to advertise it. And neither *Die Hermannsschlacht* nor the political pamphlets nor even *Der Prinz von Homburg* saw the light of publicity during Kleist's lifetime. When, at last, even his sister Ulrike turned away from him, he could live no longer. Together with Henriette Vogel he committed suicide, Nov. 21, 1811.

[144] Although the first collection of Uhland's poems did not appear until 1815, most of his best known songs and ballads were written a good deal earlier. *Der blinde König, Die sterbenden Helden* 1804; *Die Kapelle, Schäfers Sonntagslied, Das Schloss am Meere* 1805; *Des Knaben Berglied, Abschied* 1806; *Lebewohl* 1807; *Klein Roland* 1808; *Der Wirtin Töchterlein, Der gute Kamerad* 1809; *Die Rache* 1810; *Morgenlied, Abreise, Einkehr, Heimkehr, Der weisse Hirsch, Roland Schildträger, Märchen* 1811; *Frühlingsglaube, Siegfrieds Schwert, König Karls Meerfahrt, Taillefer* 1812; *Lied eines deutschen Sängers, An das Vaterland, Sängerliebe, Schwäbische Kunde, Des Sängers Fluch* 1814. It is rather remarkable that none of Uhland's finest poems belongs to the year 1813. After 1815, represented by *Graf Eberhard der Rauschebart*, and 1816, in which were written *Das alte gute Recht, Am 18. October 1816, Das Herz für unser Volk*, Uhland became less and less prolific. Yet even among his later poetry there are such wonderful creations as *Auf der Ueberfahrt* 1823; *Bertran de Born, Der Waller, Münstersage, Ver Sacrum, Tells Tod* 1829; *Wanderung, Die Bidassoabrücke, Das Glück von Edenhall, Die versunkene Krone* 1834.

[145] "Ich werde ihm den Kranz von der Stirne reissen"—a word of Kleist's spoken with reference to Goethe; Brahm *l. c.* 111.

at last a despairing plunge into the darkness. Here a gentle heart and a strong will; an early blossoming of a pure and harmonious imagination; long years of public usefulness and unflinching consecration to national tasks; and at last a serene and honoured old age, devoted to scholarly research.

And yet these two men belong together. They are opposite types of the same intellectual movement. They both represent the turning away of Romantic poetry from caprice to law, from negation to construction, from the individualistic to the collectivistic ideal.

Uhland the classic of Romanticism.

David Friedrich Strauss seems to have been the first to call Uhland the classic of Romanticism.[146] It is impossible to characterize the Suabian singer in few words more truthfully. In him there is nothing of the extravagance of a Friedrich Schlegel, nothing of the mistiness of a Novalis, nothing of the lurid fatalism of a Tieck or à Zacharias Werner. It seems as though the voluptuous dream of Romanticism had touched his soul only to give him a fuller sense of sober reality; as though all its nightly phantoms had only helped to open his eyes to the spirits that walk in the light of day[147]; as though the Wild Chase of the supernatural had passed over his head only to make him see all the more clearly the wonders hidden in the natural and the normal.[148] His figures walk up-

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[146] Cf. Fr. Th. Vischer, *Ludwig Uhland* in his *Kritische Gänge, N. F.*, IV, 148.—Cf., also, *Uhland's Leben von seiner Wittwe* (1874). Hermann Fischer, *L. Uhland* (1887). G. Hassenstein, *L. Uhland* (1887).

[147] Cf. Uhland's definition of a romantic scenery: "Eine Gegend ist romantisch, wo Geister wandeln"; Jul. Schmidt, *Gesch. d. d. Litt.* IV, 335.

[148] This distinguishes Uhland from his friend Justinus Kerner (1786–1862). In spite of his deep sense of nature (cf. the poem *Der Einsame*) and in spite of his talent for naïve healthy enjoyment (cf. the *Wanderlied:* 'Wohlauf! noch getrunken') there is an undercurrent of morbid supranaturalism in Kerner's poetry. Gustav Schwab, on the other hand, the author of *Der Reiter und der Bodensee* (1826),

right and on solid ground. They are sound and sane; chaste and true; blue-eyed children of the Black Forest, surrounded with all the charm of popular tradition and native belief; poetic types of a healthy common consciousness; eternal symbols of the abiding and preserving forces of human life. And if in Kleist we saw the birth-throes of an age labouring with new forms of national existence, we gain from Uhland's poems the impression that the rejuvenation of the national body had already been accomplished.

His beginnings.

Even in his earliest songs, which to a certain extent show the influence of the morbid and fantastic in Romanticism, there is a clearness of vision, a simplicity and depth of sentiment, which separate them from anything that Tieck ever wrote, and which place them by the side of Goethe and the Volkslied. How is it possible that in view of such wonderful poems as *Die Kapelle*, *Schäfers Sonntagslied*, *Das Schloss am Meere* (1805), *Des Knaben Berglied*, *Abschied* (1806), a man like Scherer could speak[149] contemptuously of "fair shepherds and kings and queens with red mantles and golden crowns"? Even here the Romantic form is imbued with the most real, the most universally human feeling; even here there speaks, not the capricious child of an artificial culture, but a man whose heart beats in common with the highest and the lowest of his fellow men; even here there is reflected a collective rather than an individual consciousness. And it certainly is more than a mere accident that the shepherd, kneeling down for his prayer on Sunday morning, feels "as though many were kneeling unseen with him"[150]; that the mountain boy, much as he delights in the freedom of rock and ravine,

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falls far behind Uhland in depth of feeling and power of representation. Nearest to Uhland, among the poets influenced by him, comes Eduard Mörike in such poems as *Schön-Rohtraut*, *Das verlassene Mägdlein*, and others (*Gedichte* 1838).

[149] *Gesch. d. d. Litt. p.* 653. Cf. Uhland's *Gedichte u. Dramen* II, 8.

[150] *Schäfers Sonntagslied; Gedichte u. Dramen* I, 22.

much as he glories in living above the clouds that bear lightning and thunder into the valley, also thinks of the time when he shall descend from his heights and wield the sword in defence of his country [151]:

Und wann die Sturmglock' einst erschallt,
Manch Feuer auf den Bergen wallt,
Dann steig' ich nieder, tret' ins Glied
Und schwing' mein Schwert und sing' mein Lied:
Ich bin der Knab' vom Berge!

His maturity. The democratic character of his poetry.

The most productive period of Uhland's life falls in that momentous epoch with which from so many different points of view we have already become familiar, the years from the deepest national degradation to the final delivery from the foreign yoke. And here we see most clearly that what gives to Uhland's poetry its most distinctive character is that democracy of heart which is the surest sign of true nobility, and which determined Uhland's attitude in all the great questions of his time, from the struggle against Napoleon and the constitutional conflicts in Würtemberg to the Revolution of 1848.

What poet ever knew better how the common man feels than he, what poet has surrounded ordinary experiences with a deeper glow of imagination? Nowhere has hidden love been depicted more touchingly than in *Der Wirtin Töchterlein*, or the fellowship of danger more simply and truly than in *Der gute Kamerad* (1809). Nowhere has the humorous enjoyment of harmless pleasure found a more perfect artistic expression than in the praise of "mine host, the bounteous apple tree" (*Einkehr*, 1811). There is no love song quivering with more genuine passion than those few lines (*Heimkehr*, 1811) which seem like the involuntary emitting of a breath long suppressed:

O, brich nicht Steg! du zitterst sehr.
O, stürz nicht Fels! du dräuest schwer.
Welt, geh nicht unter; Himmel, fall nicht ein,
Eh' ich mag bei der Liebsten sein!

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[151] *Des Knaben Berglied*; *l. c.* I, 25.

And what a difference there is between Uhland's mediæval figures and those of other Romanticists! *Klein Roland* (1808), *Roland Schildträger* (1811), *Siegfrieds Schwert*, *König Karls Meerfahrt*, *Taillefer*, *Sängerliebe*, *Schwäbische Kunde*, *Des Sängers Fluch* (1814)[152]—what a galaxy of beauty, of joyousness, of exultant vitality, of foolhardy combativeness, and at the same time of gentleness, of childlike trust, of serene moderation, and humble wisdom these names call up! Here the spirit of the *Nibelungenlied* seems to be united with that of Walther von der Vogelweide. Through all the martial clamour and splendour there sounds a prophecy of peace and justice; and in all the high-flown wooing and daring we recognise a strongly developed feeling for the common good. However romantic the scenery, however fabulous the incidents, we never for a moment lose the impression that here our own kinsmen are speaking and acting. And whether it be young Roland stepping into the king's palace as unconcernedly "as into the forest green"; whether it be young Siegfried driving the anvil into the ground and forging his own sword; whether it be King Charles sitting at the helm and quietly steering the ship through the gale; whether it be Taillefer riding at the head of the Normans and inspiring them with his song; whether it be the hoary bard cursing the castle of the murderous despot:—they all seem to bring before us the ideal of a nation, pious and free, strong and true; they all remind us of the words in which Uhland has expressed his own "heart for the people"[153]:

An unsrer Väter Thaten
Mit Liebe sich erbaun,
Fortpflanzen ihre Saaten,
Dem alten Grund vertraun;

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[152] Only such poems are mentioned here as are contained in the *Gedichte* of 1815. Among later poems dealing with mediæval subjects, *Bertran de Born* and *Der Waller* (both 1829) stand out as perhaps marking the climax of Uhland's art.

[153] *Das Herz für unser Volk*; *l. c.* I, 116.

In solchem Angedenken
Des Landes Heil erneun;
Um unsre Schmach sich kränken
Sich unsrer Ehre freun;
Sein eignes Ich vergessen
In aller Lust und Schmerz:
Das nennt man, wohl ermessen,
Für unser Volk ein Herz.

Uhland the poet of the German people.

Next to Schiller, Uhland is the most popular of all German poets; and justly so. For he has shown the German people their better self; he has shown the world what a wealth of strength, of bravery, of humour, of goodness, of inspiration, slumbers beneath the modest and quiet exterior of this people; he has glorified those unpretentious and emphatically German virtues: faithfulness and patience. And when toward the end of his life, at a time when the muse had long since taken leave of him, he wrote those lines of noble resignation[154]:

Das Lied, es mag am Lebensabend schweigen,
Sieht nur der Geist dann heil'ge Sterne steigen—

he unwittingly told the innermost secret of his own poetry, a poetry over which there stand hallowed stars, visible to all, though intelligible to none.

The national uprising.

In the same year in which Uhland sang of young Siegfried and of Taillefer, Napoleon retreated from Moscow. A few months later (March 17, 1813), the king of Prussia, driven by an irresistible tide of popular enthusiasm, called his people to arms.[155] And now at last the time had come for which Klopstock and

[154] Written in 1854; *l. c.* II, 315.

[155] Here are some passages from the proclamation *To my People* (Häusser, *D. Gesch. v. Tode Friedr. d. Gr. b z. Gründ. d. d. Bundes*) IV, 57 f.): "Remember your past; remember the blessings for which our ancestors have bled and struggled: freedom of conscience, honour, independence, industry, devotion to the arts, the pursuit of science. Even little peoples have taken up arms for like privileges against more powerful foes, and have triumphed. Think of the heroic Swiss

Lessing, Goethe and Schiller, Fichte and Schleiermacher, for which all the thinkers and seers of the last seventy years had worked and hoped, toward which both Classicism and Romanticism had inevitably been drifting: the time of political unity and greatness.

Of the spirit which impelled the German people in the mighty struggle that was now at hand, it is hard to form an adequate conception. A glimpse of it we seem to catch in a little scene the memory of which has been preserved by Friedrich Förster, the friend and comrade of Theodor Körner. Förster belonged like Körner to the Lützow volunteers, that noble band of German youth who, largely from the academies and universities, had flocked to the Prussian colours, a corps of warriors whose boyishly romantic enthusiasm forms one of the brightest spots in military history. On their march from Silesia where they had mustered to the scene of war, Förster's regiment about the middle of April had reached the town of Meissen, and here the incident took place which he himself describes in the following manner[156]:

The spirit of 1813.

"We had just finished our morning song in front of the inn in which our captain was quartered when I saw a man whose features seemed familiar to me entering a mail-coach. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw it was Goethe! As a friend of his son I had often been in his house; but I could not explain to myself how he, the man of peace, should have ventured into the midst of this commotion of war. I still thought I had been mistaken, especially since he had pulled a military cap over his eyes and was wrapped in a Russian general's mantle. But when I saw his little secretary, friend John, step up to the coach, I was sure it was he, and at once communicated the glorious discovery to my comrades. With a military salute I now approached the coach

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and the Dutch. Great sacrifices will be required of all. But these sacrifices are slight compared with the sacred possessions for which we make them, for which we must battle and triumph, or cease being Germans." The author of the proclamation was Hippel.

[156] Cf. A. Kohut, *Theodor Körner: s. Leben u. s. Dichtungen p.* 173. Fr. Förster, *Goethes Leben u. Werke*; Goethe's *Werke* Hempel I, 168.

and said: 'I beg to report to your excellency that a company of Royal Prussian Volunteers of the Black Rifle Corps, en route for Leipzig, have drawn up before your headquarters and desire to salute your excellency.' The captain gave the command: 'Present arms!' and I called: 'The poet of all poets, Goethe, hurrah!' The band played and the whole company cheered. He touched his cap and nodded kindly. Now I once more stepped up to him and said: 'It is no use for your excellency to try to keep your incognito; the Black Riflemen have sharp eyes, and to meet Goethe at the beginning of our march was too good an omen to pass unnoticed. We ask from you a blessing for our arms!' 'With all my heart,' he said. I held out my gun and sword; he laid his hand on them and said: 'March forward with God! and may all good things be granted to your joyous German courage!' While we again cheered him, still saluting he drove past us."

The same naïve, undefiled enthusiasm which is revealed in this little episode is manifested in the whole record of the years 1813–15. We see it in the appearance of a 'Campaign and Tent Edition' of the *Nibelungenlied*.[157] We see it in that scene described by professor Steffens of Breslau where he called upon his assembled students to desert their studies and to follow him to the recruiting-ground.[158] We see it in that most touching of war contributions, the golden wedding-rings which the Prussian women gave in exchange for iron ones.[159] We see it in the religious fervour with which whole regiments attended the communion service before setting out for the "holy war."[160] And we hear it in all the war lyrics of those years, from Schenkendorf's sweet, melodious prophecies of a new realm of poetry and freedom, to the stormy battle-cries of Körner, from the solemn and measured trombone sound of Rückert's *Geharnischte Sonette* to the joyous trumpet-call and the deep organ-strains of Ernst Moritz Arndt.[161]

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[157] The editor was Prof. Zeune of Berlin University.

[158] Cf. Henrich Steffens, *Was ich erlebte* VII, 71 ff.

[159] Häusser *l. c.* IV, 50.

[160] Cf. H. v. Treitschke, *D. Gesch. i. 19. Jhdt* I, 428 ff.

[161] A collection of them *DNL.* CXCVI.

"Germany is rising," with these words[162] Theodor Körner informs his father of his decision to sacrifice the hopes of a life graced with the happiness of youthful love, teeming with promises of literary fame, "Germany is rising, the Prussian eagle by his bold flight awakens in all faithful hearts the hope of German liberty. My art sighs for her fatherland—let me be her worthy disciple!—Now that I know what bliss there is in this life, now that all the stars of happiness shine upon me, now, by God! it is a worthy feeling that impels me; now it is a mighty conviction that no sacrifice is too great for the highest human good, the freedom of one's people. A great time demands great hearts. Shall I in cowardly ecstasy drawl my triumphal songs while my brethren fight the battle? I know you will suffer many anxieties from it, my mother will weep—God comfort her! I cannot save you this." And a few hours before his death on the field of honour, he sings that rapturous bridal song to his sword[163]:

So komm denn aus der Scheide
Du Reiters Augenweide,
Heraus, mein Schwert, heraus!
Führ' dich in's Vaterhaus!
Hurrah!

Erst that es an der Linken
Nur ganz verstohlen blinken;
Doch an die Rechte traut
Gott sichtbarlich die Braut!
Hurrah!

Drum drückt den liebeheissen
Bräutlichen Mund von Eisen
An eure Lippen fest.
Fluch! wer die Braut verlässt!
Hurrah!

Nun lasst das Liebchen singen,
Dass helle Funken springen!

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[162] Th. Körner's *Sämmtl. Werke* ed. Streckfuss I, 33 f.
[163] *Ib.* 108 ff.

Der Hochzeitmorgen graut···
Hurrah! du Eisenbraut!
Hurrah!

And of the same spirit, only still more rugged and more mature, is Arndt, the Blücher of German lyrics.[164] After he has thundered forth his mighty song of 'The God who let the iron grow,' after he has accompanied the stalwart riders through battle and death, after he has rung out the tidings of Leipzig's bloody judgment-day, after he has sung the glorious hymn of German unity, he still has breath for that splendid outburst of joy and gratitude and boundless trust which comes upon us with the overwhelming force of a chorus from Händel's *Judas Maccabeus*[165]:

Wem soll der erste Dank erschallen?
Dem Gott, der gross und wunderbar
Aus langer Schande Nacht uns allen
In Flammenglanz erschienen war;
Der unsrer Feinde Trotz zerblitzet,
Der unsre Kraft uns schön erneut,
Und auf den Sternen waltend sitzet
Von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.

Wem soll der zweite Wunsch ertönen?
Des Vaterlandes Majestät!
Verderben allen die es höhnen!
Glück dem der mit ihm fällt und steht!
Es geh', durch Tugenden bewundert,
Geliebt durch Ehrlichkeit und Recht,
Stolz von Jahrhundert zu Jahrhundert,
An Kraft und Ehren ungeschwächt!

Rückt dichter in der heil'gen Runde
Und klingt den letzten Jubelklang!
Von Herz zu Herz, von Mund zu Munde
Erbrause freudig der Gesang!
Das Wort, das unsern Bund geschürzet,
Das Heil, das uns kein Teufel raubt
Und kein Tyrannentrug uns kürzet,
Das sei gehalten und geglaubt!

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[164] An excellent characterization of Arndt by R. Haym in *Preuss. Jahrb.* V. 470 ff. For Arndt's *Geist der Zeit* cf. *supra p.* 437 f

[165] *Bundeslied*; Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Gedichte* (1860) *p.* 212

Joyousness, exultant, jubilant joyousness—this is perhaps the word which best characterizes the whole German rising against Napoleon. There is hardly a trace in it of that dark desperate hatred which gave such a sinister aspect to Heinrich von Kleist's patriotic effusions. Its dominant note is a feeling of unspeakable delight that at last all the little provincial rivalries have been forgotten, that for once the differences of class, of religion, of education have been swept away; that for once there is nothing but one grand common cause, one heaven and one earth for all who speak and think and dream German. It is as though the whole past of the nation were crowded into one supreme moment, as though old Barbarossa had risen from the sleep of centuries and brought back the splendour of the ancient empire, as though the Nibelungen heroes were striding by the side of the Black Hussars, as though the pillars and vaults of Gothic cathedrals were once more embracing a united people, as though a new 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' were bursting forth from every German heart. Wonderful, divine years! ample reward for all the sufferings and humiliations of a long servitude, glorious climax of more than half a century of unremitting intellectual effort, signals of light for all future ages!

IV. The Age of the Restoration.

We have come to the last chapter of Romanticism, to the days of the Holy Alliance and of Metternich, to the time of reaction against the very spirit which made 1813 possible, to the proscription of liberty, to the blighting of national hopes.

What a singular and astounding spectacle! Here is a people just recovered from centuries of political misery, having just regained the full sense of its power, just risen with one accord to vindicate its honour and independence; and the very moment that the foreign enemy

is vanquished, the very moment that the longed-for opportunity for a thorough national reconstruction has come, this same people again falls a victim to its hereditary lack of common consciousness, it allows the old sectional animosities to revive, it suffers the leaders in the great struggle for freedom and unity to be pushed aside, it is forced back into the old submission to princely omnipotence. Once more it is left to the dreamers and prophets to keep the ideal of national greatness alive. Another fifty years full of internal dissension and strife must pass, before the fruits of the common struggle against Napoleon can be reaped, before the nation, at least politically, is welded into one; and even then it takes the iron hand of a Bismarck to accomplish this task. *Tantae molis erat Germanam condere gentem.*

1. The Effect of the Political Reaction Upon Literature.

The attitude of the governments during this period of reaction, which lasted in the main unbroken from 1815 to the Revolution of 1848, was determined by the one desire to efface as far as possible the vestiges of the great upheaval against the old régime which had marked the beginning of the century, to reassert and to maintain the obsolete principle of the divine right of kings. It was characterized by the retirement from public life of nearly all the men who had helped to bring about the reorganization of Prussia; by the impeachment for high treason of patriots like Arndt, Jahn, and Görres (1819); by the wholesale incarceration of harmless university students who, like Fritz Reuter, had committed the heinous crime of wearing the German colours in their buttonholes[166]; by the

The Metternich system.

[166] It is an interesting fact that the beginnings of a more general German immigration to the United States were connected with this reactionary persecution of the universities; and that two of the most remarkable men among this first generation of German immigrants, Karl Follen and Franz Lieber, became connected, the former with Harvard University, the latter with Columbia College. A third, Carl Postl (Charles Sealsfield), became the Cooper of the German novel.

famous decree of the Federal Diet of 1835 [167] putting an interdict upon the entire literary production, future as well as past, of Heine and the other members of "Young Germany"; by the dismissal from Göttingen University of seven of its most illustrious professors (among them the brothers Grimm, Dahlmann, and Gervinus) because they had protested against an open violation of constitutional right committed by the king of Hanover (1837).

Its effect on public and literary life.

Public opinion, which in the days of Stein and Fichte had at last become a motive power in national life, was again reduced to naught. For although in the constitutional monarchies of South Germany at least there was enjoyed a certain degree of parliamentary freedom, the political strength represented by these miniature states was so little, that the debates of their legislatures had seldom more than academic value and hardly ever stirred the nation as a whole. And while Austria and Prussia were foremost in pursuing a policy of persistent and relentless coercion, the educated public of Vienna and Berlin was engrossed in discussing the latest literary scandal or the advent of a new ballet-dancer on the operatic stage. No wonder that this should have been the time in which renegades of freedom, like Friedrich von Gentz, Adam Müller, K. L. von Haller, were praised as great political philosophers; in which the 'Fate Tragedy' with its pallid faces and meaningless horrors, with its hopeless gospel of submission to a blind chance, achieved its greatest theatrical triumphs [168]; in which the hollow phantasms of a spiritualistic dreamer like Amadeus Hoffmann were admired as marvels of poetic fiction.[169] No wonder that such a

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Cf. T. S. Perry, *Francis Lieber*. H. v. Treitschke, *Deutsche Gesch. im 19. Jhdt* III, 477 ff. K. Francke, *Karl Follen and the Liberal Movement in Germany; Papers of the American Hist. Assoc.* V, 1, p. 65 ff. A. B. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield* (Baltimore, 1892).

[167] Cf. Heine's *Sämtl. Werke* ed. Elster VII, 530 f. 545 f.

[168] Cf. *supra p.* 455. [169] Cf. *supra p.* 455.

hopeless pedant as Raupach should have been exalted by this age as a master of the historical drama [170]; that the lyric dilettanteism of the period should have found an organ in those numberless poetic almanacs and keepsakes embellished with inane steel-engravings, the thought of which forced upon the lips of the manly Gervinus the words of Harry Hotspur [171]:

> I had rather be a kitten and cry mew,
> Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.

It is sad to see how even the best minds of the nation were affected by this universal repression of public activity, how they were crippled in their natural development, alienated from their own day and their own country, led astray in their tastes and propensities, discouraged in their views of life, debarred from truly constructive achievements.

Grillparzer.

Grillparzer, the greatest dramatic talent since Kleist, a poet whose début in *Die Ahnfrau* (1817) showed a wonderful power of instilling human blood even into the lifeless characters of the 'Fate Tragedy,' whose *Sappho* (1818) seemed to bring back the classic days of Goethe's *Iphigenie*, whose *Golden Fleece* (1821) and *King Ottokar* (1825) recalled the grand dimensions of Schiller's genius,—Grillparzer was doomed to spend his life in the stifling atmosphere of Austrian bureaucracy and to see his poetic energies wasted under the humiliating annoyances of a petty censorship [172]; so that instead of developing into

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[170] Cf. Heine's amusing characterization of Raupach in *D. romantische Schule* III, 4 (*Werke* V, 340 ff.) and *Ueber die Französische Bühne* I (*l. c.* IV, 493 ff.). Raupach's *Hohenstaufen* 1830–'37.—That the beginnings of the German historical novel (Hauff's *Lichtenstein* 1826; W. Alexis's *Der falsche Waldemar* 1842) fall in this same time, is well known.

[171] *Henry IV.* III, 1. Cf. Gervinus *Gesch. d. d. Dichtung* IV (1840), introd.

[172] The manuscript of *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* was kept for two years in the censor's office; so that the poet had given it up as

a distinct type of his own he ended in a half classic, half romantic eclecticism.

Rückert, the poet of the *Geharnischte Sonette*, the prophet of a time when the ravens will fly no more around Barbarossa's mountain, when the old hero will come back to lead his people to glory,[173] learned through bitter personal experience that this day of national greatness was again removed into a far distance. His own generation he felt destined to be consumed in the furnace of purifying trials[174]:

Rückert.

So lasse sich auch dies Geschlecht nicht däuchten
Freiheit zu finden, weil es bricht die Bande;
Es muss verbrennen in dem Läutrungsbrande,
Das reine Licht wird erst den Enkeln leuchten.

And he himself took refuge from a hostile world in the quiet communion with nature, his family, and his books. Far be it from us to underrate the wealth of noble thought and feeling which the German people owes to the author of the *Liebesfrühling* (1823) and the *Weisheit des Brahmanen* (1836 ff.). His friend Kopp was right when he praised him as the master of didactic verse, as a poetic interpreter of pantheism, when he found in the best of his poems a magic transparency and depth of colour such as is spread over the solemn landscape of the East.[175] And yet who can help

lost when by a mere accident it was brought to light. After the first performance of *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* the government offered to buy the manuscript on condition that the drama should never be published or performed again. Laube, who relates these astounding facts (Grillparzer's *Sämtl. Werke* I, *p.* xxv f.) pertinently adds: "Man denke sich die Empfindung des Dichters [bei solchen Vorgängen]! Musste nicht der Gedanke in ihm herrschend werden: dein ganzes Dichten ist wohl ein Verbrechen, und das fernere Trachten nach Stoffen und Compositionen ist die müssigste, unergiebigste Thätigkeit von der Welt?"—Cf. J. Volkelt, *Grillparzer als Dichter des Tragischen.* Bulthaupt's *Dramaturgie des Schauspiels* III. Sauer's edition.

[173] *Barbarossa; Gedichte* (*Ausw. d. Verf.*) *p.* 104.

[174] *Geharn. Sonette, Nachklang; l. c.* 164.

[175] Cf. Fr. Reuter, *F. Rückert u. J. Kopp p.* 17 ff.

feeling that much of this oriental brilliancy in Rückert's poems is laboured and artificial; who can help regretting that this sturdy mind should have been forced to emigrate to Persians and Hindoos in order to find inspiration for his song; who can escape the impression that there lies a shadow of disappointment and resignation over all his poetry?[176]

> Als ich Abschied nahm, als ich Abschied nahm,
> War die Welt mir voll so sehr;
> Als ich wieder kam, als ich wieder kam,
> War alles leer.

And how is it with most of the other eminent writers of the time? with Schopenhauer, with Platen, Immermann, Börne, Heine, Lenau? Must we not see in them what we see in Byron and the youthful Victor Hugo, sufferers from a social and political system so vicious and absurd that by its aid men like Metternich and Nicholas I. of Russia could succeed in ruling Europe for more than thirty years? They all show the impress of a time unable to satisfy the deepest cravings of the heart, unworthy of the serious efforts of serious men. They all are seekers for an unknown something which is to bring relief from the terrible agony of intellectual suffocation. Would they not have been larger types of men—Schopenhauer less embittered, Lenau less morbid, Börne less fanatic, Heine less vacillating, Platen and Immermann less morose and self-absorbed, if they could have seen the hopes of 1813 fulfilled, if they had not been deprived of the noblest privilege of freemen, a successful activity in the service of one's country?

Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer, a dialectic genius of wonderful consistency and power, was held throughout his life in the magic spell of a moral quietism which stamps him as a belated Romanticist of the Friedrich Schlegel type. His keen critical sense made him see that the will and not the intellect is the primary force of life, that

[176] *Aus der Jugendzeit; l. c.* 330.

what has created this world of ours with all its diversified forms of existence, with all its manifold institutions, beliefs, ideals, is in the last analysis a blind, irresistible desire for functional activity. No view of life seems fuller of incentive than this, more capable of inspiring with a firm trust in the gradual evolution of the world from the sensual to the spiritual, for leading to active participation in the work of human progress. Schopenhauer, whose youthful impressions were formed in the gloomiest days of Napoleonic tyranny, whose manhood fell in a time which made it impossible for him to take a part in the affairs of his country,[177] was led by it to the negation of all progress. The desire for activity, instead of being a source of satisfaction, is to him, as it was to the author of *Lucinde*, the root of all human suffering. He purposely closes his eyes to the fact that the true reward of effort consists, not in the attainment of its object, but in the effort itself; and he squanders his vast resources of reason and learning in the futile attempt to demonstrate that the goal of our aspirations *is* unattainable, that there is no happiness, that the essence of life is pain. "The desire is in its very nature suffering: its fulfilment soon begets satiety: the goal was only an illusion: attained, it loses its charm: under a new form the desire, the need reappears: if not, there results desolation, emptiness, ennui, the struggle against which is fully as tormenting as that against necessity":—this seems to him the monotonous and dreary refrain of all existence.[178] For even the purest joys of life, pure because they afford a temporary relief from the ever-restless desire, the joys of philosophic insight and

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[177] It is a noteworthy coincidence that the first edition of *Die Welt als Wille u. Vorstellung* appeared only a few months before the so-called Karlsbad Resolutions of 1819, the beginning of the aggressive policy of the German governments against liberalism.

[178] Cf. *D. Welt als W. u. V.* IV, 57; *Werke* ed. Frauenstädt II, 370.

of artistic contemplation, are only fleeting dreams from which there is a terrible awakening. Nay, these very joys mark the climax of life's tragedy; for they imply a degree of intellectual susceptibility which makes those able to feel them the chief sufferers from cruel reality. And thus there remains only one thing to be hoped for: the complete and permanent negation of the will, the extinction of this world of hopeless endeavour, the Nirvana, the Nothing.[179]

Lenau.

It would of course be folly to assume that in a less reactionary age a man like Lenau would have been a gay child of the world. Nor are we utilitarian enough to wish that he had been. His poetry would lose its most delicate perfume if it were deprived of the sweet melancholy that pervades it. Had he not grieved so bitterly over the loss of his childhood's faith, had he not pined and craved for that peace of the soul which passeth all understanding and which the world cannot give, we should not have had his *Schilflieder*, we should not have had that wonderful song to Night[180]:

> Weil auf mir, du dunkles Auge,
> Uebe deine ganze Macht,
> Ernste, milde, träumerische,
> Unergründlich süsse Nacht!
> Nimm mit deinem Zauberdunkel
> Diese Welt von hinnen mir,
> Dass du über meinem Leben
> Einsam schwebest für und für.

What we mean by calling Lenau a victim of his time[180a] is this. No one can fail to see that with all his pensiveness and sadness there was in Lenau a deep instinct for all that

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[179] Cf. *D. Welt als W. u. V.* IV, 71; *l. c.* 483 ff.

[180] *Bitte; Werke* ed. Max Koch (*DNL.* CLIV) I, 49.

[180a] Cf. Grillparzer's poem *An Nicolaus Lenau; Sämmtl. Werke* I, 1:0:

> Was dich zerbrach, hat Staaten schon zerbrochen:
> Dich hob, dich trug und dich verdarb die Zeit.

is brave, manly, free, bold. In his veins there ran the fiery blood of the Hungarian nobleman; his heart never beat higher than when, roaming about on the endless plains of his native land, he would see a troop of brown-faced sons of the *Pussta* gallop past him; and his verse is never more fervent or powerful than when he describes those magnificent fellows dancing at the lonely inn in the midst of the prairie, all aglow with wine and joyfulness, the clatter of their spurs mingling with the intoxicating strains of gypsy music.[181] What in these popular scenes from his native land he depicted with such rapturous passion, a sturdy enjoyment and unreflective grasp of the moment, a healthy, free, masculine activity, was denied to the poet himself. The Austria of Metternich, to use Lenau's own words,[182] "had no room for deeds." And thus this man with the soul of a hero found himself condemned to the rôle of a passive and lonely spectator of life. Being too deep a nature to derive satisfaction, like his friend Anastasius Grün, from the display of liberal oratory, he turned his back upon an age which, especially since the crushing failure of the Polish rebellion (1831),[183] seemed more and more to be drifting toward Russian despotism. For a time he cherished the illusion that in the great republic beyond the sea he might discover a world worthy of his song.

"I am going to send my imagination to school," he writes,[184] "namely, into the forests of North America; I shall hear the roar of the Niagara and shall sing hymns of the Niagara. My poetry lives and breathes in nature, and in America nature is grander and more beautiful than in Europe. An immense wealth of glorious sights awaits me there, an abundance of divine scenes, untouched and virginal like the soil of the primeval forests. I pro-

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[181] Cf. *Die Heideschenke; l. c.* 151 ff. *Die Werbung; ib.* 28.

[182] Letter of July 19, 1840; Anton X. Schurz, *Lenau's Leben* II, 36.

[183] Cf. *In der Schenke* and *Der Polenflüchtling; Werke* I, 22–26.

[184] Letter of March 16, 1832; Schurz *l. c.* I, 161 f.—What Lenau here expresses as an artistic want was a few years later realized in the gorgeous descriptions of tropic scenery by Freiligrath (*Gedichte* 1838).

mise myself a wonderful effect from this upon my mind. And perhaps in this new world there will arise in me a new world of poetry. I really feel something slumbering in me, entirely different from what I have been thus far. Perhaps this unknown something will be awakened by the thundering call of the Niagara. How beautiful that very name is: Niagara! Niagara! Niagara!"

And when in the autumn of 1832 he did indeed set sail for America, he felt as though he were on a pilgrimage to the holy land of freedom[185]:

Fleug, Schiff, wie Wolken durch die Luft,
Hin, wo die Götterflamme brennt!
Spül mir hinweg, o Meer, die Kluft,
Die von der Freiheit mich noch trennt!

Du neue Welt, du freie Welt,
An deren blütenreichem Strand
Die Flut der Tyrannei zerschellt,
Ich grüsse dich, mein Vaterland!

A winter spent in the neighbourhood of Pittsburg was sufficient to change this youthful enthusiasm to utter disappointment and contempt for a country which "has no wine and no nightingales," whose national beverage, cider, "rhymes with leider,"[186] and which to its citizens has no other interest "than that of a vast insurance company."[187] Even in primeval nature, from the sight of which Lenau had hoped for a new inner life, he found nothing but gloom and hopelessness: an ever-repeated and ever-monotonous work of destruction, a ruthless struggle of darkness against light, of brutal force against delicate form, one grand triumphal

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[185] *Abschied* (*Lied eines auswandernden Portugiesen*); *Werke* I, 95.

[186] Cf. letter of Oct. 16, 1832; Schurz *l. c.* I, 198 f.: "Man darf diese Kerle nur im Wirtshause sehen, um sie auf immer zu hassen. Eine lange Tafel, auf beiden Seiten fünfzig Stühle; Speisen, meist Fleisch, bedecken den Tisch. Da erschallt die Fressglocke, und hundert Amerikaner stürzen herein, keiner sieht den andern an, keiner spricht ein Wort, jeder stürzt auf eine Schüssel, frisst hastig hinein, springt dann auf, wirft den Stuhl hin, und eilt davon, Dollars zu verdienen."

[187] Letter of March 6, 1833; Schurz *l. c.* I, 208.

scene of death. And thus we see him in the silent forests of the Alleghanies,[188] where the young growth "in vain tries to sprout forth through mouldering trunks, the withered fingers of death," bury his head in the decaying leaves and stare into the abyss of life's mystery.

So lag ich auf dem Grunde schwer beklommen,
Dem Tode nah, wie nie zuvor, gekommen;
Bis ich die dürren Blätter rauschen hörte,
Und mich der Huftritt meines Rosses störte.
Es schritt heran zu mir, als wollt' es mahnen
Mich an die Dämmerung und unsre Bahnen;
Ich aber rief: "Ist's auch der Mühe wert,
Noch einmal zu beschreiten dich, mein Pferd?"
Es blickt mich an mit stiller Lebenslust,
Die wärmend mir gedrungen in die Brust,
Und ruhebringend wie mit Zaubermacht.
Und auf den tiefeinsamen Waldeswegen
Ritt ich getrost der nächsten Nacht entgegen,
Und der geheimnisvollen Todesnacht.

Is it a wonder that this man, even after the return to his home and his friends, should in vain have striven for a more serene and hopeful view of the world? that in his *Faust* (1836) he should have made self-destruction the goal of free thought? that in *Savonarola* (1837) he should have denounced pantheism and modern science? and that his mind should at last have fallen a prey to the dark powers which he saw lurking about him everywhere? Let us be thankful that Lenau did not sink into the night of living death, before having created the masterwork of his art, before having uttered at least one clear and penetrating call for spiritual freedom, at least one word of unshaken trust in the future of humanity. At the end of *Die Albigenser* (1842), that superb gallery of frescoes[189] immortalizing the

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[188] *Der Urwald; Werke* I, 237 f.

[189] Lenau said himself of *Die Albigenser*: "Sie sind das Kühnste, das Grossartigste, was ich gemacht habe. Es sind Fresken." *Werke* II, 350.

nameless sufferings and the dauntless heroism of the noble race whose rebellion against mediæval hierarchy is among the first great popular risings of modern Europe, there stand the lines[190]:

Das Licht vom Himmel lässt sich nicht versprengen,
Noch lässt der Sonnenaufgang sich verhängen
Mit Purpurmänteln oder dunklen Kutten.
Den Albigensern folgen die Hussiten
Und zahlen blutig heim was jene litten.
Nach Huss und Ziska kommen Luther, Hutten,
Die dreissig Jahre, die Cevennenstreiter,
Die Stürmer der Bastille, UND SO WEITER !

Platen and Immermann

It would be hard to conceive of two literary types more unlike each other and at the same time more nearly related than Platen and Immermann. Platen by birth and instinct an aristocrat; living in free and leisurely devotion to his art; producing nothing without giving it the stamp of perfection; a contemplative spirit feeling truly at home only with the great of all ages; a sculptor of words; a connoisseur of the sublime. Immermann by family tradition and calling belonging to the Prussian bureaucracy; compelled to divide his time between literary work and official duties; often defective in his workmanship and never entirely sure of his tools; not until after many tentative efforts finding his true vocation as a delineator of every-day life; a thinker rather than an artist; an observer rather than a sympathizer. Both men stubbornly adhering to the spirit which in 1815 made them combatants against Napoleon; both lovers of civil freedom and national dignity; both unable to come to terms with an age which had no room for their ideals of life.

Platen.

What a proud, manly figure this Platen is! like Rückert one of those earnest, sinewy Franconians who preserve the type of Wolfram von Eschenbach and Dürer to the present day. He, if any one, seemed chosen to sing of the great affairs of his country and nation; he, of

[190] *Werke* II, 463 f.

all men, seemed destined to be for his time, what Schiller had been for his, a priest of human dignity, a herald of human progress; he, of all poets, seemed able to lead his people to that harmonious and lawful freedom which was the goal of his own aspirations.

O goldne Freiheit, der auch ich entstamme,
Die du den Aether, wie ein Zelt, entfaltest,
Die du, der Schönheit und des Lebens Amme,
Die Welt ernährst und immer neu gestaltest;
Vestalin, die du des Gedankens Flamme
Als ein Symbol der Ewigkeit verwaltest:
Lass uns den Blick zu dir zu heben wagen,
Lehr' uns die Wahrheit, die du kennst, ertragen!

It was the tragedy of Platen's life that he was unable to inspire his contemporaries with the ideal expressed in these words[191]; that instead of being borne along on the crest of an irresistible popular movement for constitutional liberty, he found himself cast aside by the current of retrogressive absolutism; that he who began as an enthusiastic spokesman of a truly national art should have ended as a voluntary exile, disappointed and out of sympathy even with the best of his people.

German literature has reaped from Platen's gloom lyric poems as exquisite and noble as ever came from souls more joyful and serene.[192] No criticism of his sonnets could be more unjust than the often-heard remark that behind their faultless form there beats no living heart. It was the fervour of deepest feeling, it was the white heat of passionate

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[191] *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* III, *Parab.; Ges. Werke* (1847) IV, 45.

[192] The following is a chronological list of the more important of Platen's works. *Gaselen* 1821. *Sonette aus Venedig* 1825. *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* 1826. *Gedichte* 1828. *Der romantische Œdipus* 1828. *Gedichte*² 1834. *Die Abbasiden* 1834 (finished 1830). Platen died in Syracuse, in 1835, only 39 years old. A detailed chronology in the Hempel edition of his works III, 289 ff.—Cf. Goedeke's sketch of his life in vol. I of the *Ges. Werke.* J. Marbach, *Platens Stellung in d. d. Natlit.; Weimar. Jahrb.* IV, 43 ff. J. L. Hoffmann, *Platens Stellung zu Lit. u. Leben ; Nürnberger Album für 1857, p.* 154 ff.

grief which melted Platen's language into such absolute purity and liquidness that it could be welded into the most flawless and perfect rhythm. Those magnificent pictures of grandeur in decay through which Platen has surrounded the name of Venice with a new immortality, could not have been created by a man who had not in himself experienced that "long, eternal sigh" which he saw hovering over the lagoons and palaces of the city of the Adria.[193] No man whose soul had not been seized with an irresistible desire to flee from this noisy and inane world into the desert of a consecrated solitude, could have written that sublime interpretation of Titian's John the Baptist [194]:

Zur Wüste fliehend vor dem Menschenschwarme
Steht hier ein Jüngling, um zu reinern Sphären
Durch Einsamkeit die Seele zu verklären,
Die hohe, grossgestimmte, gotteswarme.

Voll von Begeisterung, von heil'gem Harme,
Erglänzt sein ew'ger, ernster Blick von Zähren;
Nach jenem, den Maria soll gebären,
Scheint er zu deuten mit erhobnem Arme.

Wer kann sich weg von diesem Bilde kehren
Und möchte nicht, mit brünstigen Gebärden,
Den Gott im Busen Tizian's verehren?

O goldne Zeit, die nicht mehr ist im Werden,
Als noch die Kunst vermocht die Welt zu lehren,
Und nur das Schöne heilig war auf Erden!

No man who had not zealously striven for harmony with his native surroundings, who had not felt the bitter pangs of intellectual isolation and homelessness, could have written those words of manly resignation [195]:—

Es sehnt sich ewig dieser Geist ins Weite
Und möchte fürder, immer fürder streben;
Nie könnt' ich lang an einer Scholle kleben,
Und hätt' ein Eden icb an jeder Seite.

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[193] *Sonette nr.* 32; *Werke* II, 111.
[194] *Sonette nr.* 36; *l. c.* 113.
[195] *Sonette nr.* 81; *l. c.* 143.

Mein Geist, bewegt von innerlichem Streite,
Empfand so sehr in diesem kurzen Leben,
Wie leicht es ist, die Heimat aufzugeben,
Allein wie schwer, zu finden eine zweite.

Doch wer aus voller Seele hasst das Schlechte,
Auch aus der Heimat wird es ihn verjagen,
Wenn dort verehrt es wird vom Volk der Knechte.

Weit klüger ist's, dem Vaterland entsagen,
Als unter einem kindischen Geschlechte
Das Joch des blinden Pöbelhasses tragen.

It may be that the peculiarity of Platen's genius was brought out rather than disguised by the attitude of defiance against his own generation forced upon him through the political reaction of his time. What must for ever be considered a national misfortune, what for ever will be an irreparable loss both for the political and the literary history of modern Europe, is that this born defender of freedom never found an opportunity to fight the battle of freemen; that he never had an opponent worthy of himself.[196] That there was in him a truly Aristophanic power of invective is proven by his satirical plays *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* (1826) and *Der romantische Oedipus* (1829). He who enters the fantastic world of these comedies without pedantic considerations of theatrical canons will be unable to resist the breath of righteous indignation at every sort of literary sham which pervades them; he will not fail to rejoice at the crushing blows showered upon the hollow perversities of the 'Fate Tragedy' and other forms of Romantic wilfulness. But all the keener will be the regret that it was never given to Platen to extend his powerful satire to the political field; that—to use his own words [197]—"instead of giving a picture

[196] His disgraceful wrangle with Heine, actuated as it was on both sides by nothing but personal spite, does not deserve the name of polemics. That Platen's attacks against Immermann proceeded from an entirely mistaken estimate of Immermann, there can be no doubt.

[197] *D. verh. Gabel* IV, *Parab.; Werke* IV, 60.

of the world" he had to resign himself to giving "a picture of the picture of the world." And who will condemn the poet that he at last abandoned all faith in his people and turned with bitter abuse against those whom he had loved so well? This is what he wrote when the bloodhounds of reactionary morality, the literary police, interfered with his *Polenlieder*, in which he had been sacrilegious enough to speak for Polish freedom and against the Czar of Russia [198]:—

So muss ich denn gezwungen schweigen,
Und so verlässt mich jener Wahn,
Mich fürder einem Volk zu zeigen
Das wandelt eine solche Bahn.

Doch gieb, o Dichter, dich zufrieden,
Es büsst die Welt nur wenig ein,
Du weisst es längst, man kann hienieden
Nichts Schlechtres als ein Deutscher sein.

Immermann.

It is Immermann who has most clearly defined and most severely condemned the literary character of this whole age by calling it "an age of the after-born." [199]

"Of misfortune there has been enough at all times. The curse of the present generation is to be miserable without any particular misfortune. A desolate wavering and vacillating, a laughable mock earnestness and abstraction, a groping one knows not whither, a fear of horrors which are all the more uncanny since they have no shape! We are, to express the whole misery in a word, late comers, weighed down by the burden which is the lot of the heirs and the after-born. The great movement in the realm of spirit which our fathers started from their modest huts has flooded us with a wealth of treasures which now are spread out on all counters. Without special effort even mediocrity may acquire at least the small change of every art and science. But it is with borrowed ideas as it is with borrowed money: he who

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[198] *Polenlieder, Epilog; Werke* Hempel I, 115. Cf. the powerful *Eamus omnis execrata civitas ; ib.* 102.

[199] Cf. *Die Epigonen* II, 10; Immermann's *Werke* Hempel V, 123 f. —A vivid account of the effects of this intellectual condition on German university life in F. Reuter, *Die Erlanger Burschenschaft p.* 201 ff.

recklessly trades with the capital of others doubly impoverishes himself."

There is certainly a good deal of truth in all this, not only for Immermann's time, but for ours as well; but can it be said that Immermann himself had grappled with the problems of life in such a manner as to make him a safe guide out of the confusion of this age? Was he not himself largely feeding on the thought of a past generation? Was he not himself groping rather than seeing his way?

Undoubtedly, we feel something of a *Faust* atmosphere in his *Merlin* (1832), the tragedy of that mysterious son of Satan and the saintly virgin who succumbs in the attempt to unite the two poles of human existence, the spirit and the senses. Yet what in Goethe's drama is embodied in concrete and living beings is here dissolved into grand but shadowy allegories. And if the keynote of *Faust* is hope and endeavour, the keynote of *Merlin* is discord and destruction. "*Merlin*," says Immermann himself,[200] "was to be the tragedy of negation. The divine in us when it enters the realm of appearances is refracted, disintegrated, by contact with it. Even the religious feeling is subject to this law. Only within certain bounds is it kept from becoming a caricature. I doubt whether there is a single saint who entirely avoided being ridiculous. Reflections like these, only sublimated, spiritualized, I tried to express in *Merlin*. The son of Satan and the virgin, ecstatic with devout rapture, on his way to God, falls a prey to the most abject madness."

Again, no one can fail to see a reflex of *Wilhelm Meister* in Immermann's *Die Epigonen* (1836).[201] In both novels there are depicted important phases of social development: in *Wilhelm Meister* the rise of the third estate to the intellectual and social level of the hereditary aristocracy, in *Die Epigonen*

[200] *Düsseldorfer Anfänge* 4; *Werke* XX, 157 f.

[201] Cf. Fr. Schultess, *Zeitgeschichte u. Zeitgenossen in Immermanns Epigonen; Preuss. Jahrb.* LXXIII, 212 ff.

the decomposition of the entire old order caused by the rise of modern industrialism. But there is a remarkable contrast in the attitude of the two authors toward their themes. Goethe sees in the transition from an aristocracy of birth to an aristocracy of intellect and character a step forward in civilization; and the hero of his novel typifies this progress in his own career. Immermann considers modern industrialism as an unmitigated evil, as the forerunner of social anarchy; and his hero stands for reaction instead of progress. The words spoken by him at the end of the novel, when through the acquisition of a vast estate he sees himself at the head of a manufacturing community, are typical of the drift of the whole book. "First of all," he says,[202] "the factories are to be done away with, and the fields to be restored to agriculture. These establishments for the artificial gratification of artificial wants appear to me downright ruinous and bad. The soil belongs to the plough, to sunshine and rain, which unfold the seed-corn, and to the simple industrious hand. With stormlike rapidity the present age is moving on toward a dry mechanism. We cannot check its course; but we are certainly not to blame if we hedge off a little green spot for ourselves and ours and defend this island as long as possible against the tide of the surging industrial waves."

Even in his last and ripest novel, in *Münchhausen* (1838–39), Immermann manifests this same spirit of isolation, of opposition to the prevailing current of his own age. Who can help admiring the high sense of justice and truth which here induces Immermann to arraign the follies and insincerities of the whole Restoration epoch before the tribunal of his merciless satire? Who would not sympathize with his scorn at the renewal of obsolete feudal institutions, with his flings at the somnambulism of the modern advocates of a mediæval Christianity, at the shallowness of a purely in-

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[202] *Die Epigonen* IX, 16; *Werke* VII, 257.

tellectual culture, at the arrogance of a short-sighted bureaucracy? And who would not all the more gratefully acknowledge the beauty of that picture of undefiled and sturdy popular life which forms such an impressive contrast to this array of social sham and patchwork: the picture of that grand old Westphalian peasant, who, untouched by modern sophistry, unaffected by the soulless principles of a formal jurisprudence, guards the sovereignty of traditional law with the rigid dignity of an Old Testament patriarch? The mysterious sword of Carolus Magnus by the authority of which this *Hofschulze* pronounces the verdicts of the court of freeholders and neighbours, is a fitting symbol of the sanctity in which he holds his office as an organ of popular self-government. And when this man succumbs to a tragic fate, when his sword is stolen, when the secrets of the peasant court are divulged, when the court is swept away by the levelling machinery of the modern state, we yet feel the truth of the words uttered by a fair-minded looker-on[203]: "Let the judge's seat crumble to pieces, let the sword be stolen, let them call out the secret usages from all the roofs. Have you not found in yourself and in your friends the watchword of independence? This is the watchword by which you recognise your own and which cannot be taken from

[203] *Münchhausen* VIII, 5; *Werke* IV, 121, f.—The same spirit which lives in these sturdy Westphalian characters of Immermann's we feel as a creative force in the lyric poems of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (d. 1848), the author of *Die Schlacht im Lorner Bruch*, a true daughter of the "red soil": pure and strong; stubborn and gentle; of a soaring idealism, yet full of tenderness for the humble and the lowly; passionately clinging to ancient traditions, yet open to every true feeling. Cf. the biography by W. Kreiten in vol. I of her *Ges. Werke.* H. Hüffer, *Annette v. Droste-H. u. ihre Werke.* Also *Preuss. Jahrb.* LXVI, 439 ff. LXIX, 340 ff.—Compared with these absolutely genuine representations of Westphalian yeomanry and the equally truthful sketches of Swiss popular life by Jeremias Gotthelf (*Uli der Knecht* 1841), the graceful *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* by Auerbach (1843) appear somewhat affected.

you. You have planted the conviction that .nan's place is among his nearest, the plain, true, simple folk; not with strangers who will force upon him the stamp of artificiality and distortedness. And this conviction has no need of the stone seats under the old linden trees in order to find good law. Your freedom, your manliness, your firm iron nature, you yourself, you sublime old man,—this is the true sword of Carolus Magnus, and the hand of theft cannot reach out for this." All this as well as the story of a deep and pathetic love connected with the fate of the *Hofschulze* has the genuine ring of golden poetry. Yet here again, was it necessary to confine most that is healthy and true to a sphere uninvaded by modern civilization, and to represent nearly all that is specifically modern as corrupt and diseased? Is this a wise attitude for a man to take who wishes to lead his age to better things? Do we not here once more see the narrowing influence exerted upon Immermann by the political repression of his time which debarred him from a more hopeful view of the future, and which with all his liberalism and broadmindedness made him in a certain way a reactionist himself?

Börne and Heine.

The same age which thus prevented Immermann and Platen from truly constructive achievements brought out whatever there was negative and undermining in Börne and Heine. We cannot sympathize with the violent declamations of contemporary Anti-Semitism against what is called the inroad of Judaism into German culture, an inroad which we are told began with these two men.[204] We are unwilling to join in the defama-

[204] Cf. H. v. Treitschke, *D. Gesch. im 19. Jhdt* III, 701 ff. IV, 419 ff. It is a mistake to think of Wolfgang Menzel, the intellectual father of modern German Anti-Semitism, as an irreconcilable enemy of Börne and Heine. His estimate of both men, in vol. IV of his *Die deutsche Litteratur* (1836), belongs to the best that has been said about either. A most judicious account of Börne and Heine in J. Proelss, *D. junge Deutschland p.* 81 ff. 124 ff. Cf. the first edition of *GG.* § 325, 41. 42. A detailed synopsis of the opinions of French

tion of writers whose services as forerunners of the Revolution of 1848 should be sufficient to secure them an honourable place in German history. We respect in Börne a journalist of republican integrity and fearlessness, a patriot imbued with the conviction that literature is a public trust. We admire in Heine a poetic genius in whom there vibrated the accords as well as the discords of a whole century. If there is to be blame—and alas! there is ample ground for it—let them be blamed first who stigmatized these Jews as Jews; who slandered their race and vilified their ideals; who cast suspicion upon their motives and slurs upon their achievements; who forced them into unworthy compromises and stratagems, or else into a sterile opposition to the whole existing order; who in a word, by disfranchising them, made them either scoffers or fanatics or both.

There are few passages in Heine which reveal in so touching a manner his native sympathies, which demonstrate so conclusively how humiliating must have been for him the adoption of the Christian faith necessitated by the exigencies of his social position, as the one, in his essay on Shakspere, where he relates of a performance of the *Merchant of Venice* in Drury Lane [205]:

"There stood behind me in the box a beautiful pale British woman, who at the end of the fourth act wept impetuously and more than once exclaimed: 'The poor man is wronged!' It was a face of the noblest Greek cut, and her eyes were large and black.

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critics on Heine in L. P. Betz, *Heine in Frankreich*. Matthew Arnold's article on Heine, which first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* for Aug. 1863, was reprinted in the *Essays in Criticism*.

[205] *Shakespeare's Mädchen u. Frauen; Sämtl. Werke* ed. Elster V, 448 f. Cf. the vision in *Atta Troll* 19. 20 (*Werke* II, 394 ff.) where, among the Greek goddess Diana, the Celtic fairy Abunde, and the Jewess Herodias, Heine gives preference to Herodias :

Denn ich liebe dich am meisten !
Mehr als jene Griechengöttin,
Mehr als jene Fee des Nordens,
Lieb' ich dich, du tote Jüdin !

I have never been able to forget them, those large black eyes, which wept for Shylock! And when I think of those tears, I must rank the *Merchant of Venice* with the tragedies, although the framework of the play is adorned with the gayest masks, satyrs, and amorettes, and although the poet meant it as a comedy. Shakspere probably intended to amuse the crowd with the representation of a hateful, fabulous monster who craves for blood, and instead loses his daughter and his ducats and is moreover held up to ridicule. But the genius of the poet, the world-spirit living in him, is more powerful than his private will; and thus it happened that, in spite of the glaring caricature, Shakspere vindicated in Shylock an unfortunate sect which Providence for inscrutable reasons has burdened with the hatred of the rabble both high and low and which has not always been able to reward this hatred with loving-kindness."

And Börne, the child of the Frankfurt *Ghetto*, who well remembered the time when no Jew was allowed on a sidewalk in the public park; when on every Sunday afternoon the gate of the Jewish quarter was closed and guarded by a sentry; Börne, who lived to see that the very triumph of the national cause in 1815 brought to the Jews of Frankfurt the abolition of the civil rights and liberties acquired by them during the Napoleonic invasion,—is Börne to be condemned because he did not forget his origin? Would it not be more gracious to admire the exaltedness of soul which enabled him to remember his origin and yet to hope for the future of Germany? Indeed he must be deaf to all human voices except his own who does not hear the ring of true humanity in the answer given in one of his *Letters from Paris* (1830–1833)[206] to the continual aspersions against his nationality.

"Poor German people! Living as they do on the lowest floor, oppressed by the seven stories of the higher classes, they feel relieved if they can talk of people who live still lower than they themselves, in the cellar. Not being Jews comforts them for not being Privy-Councillors. No, having been born a Jew has never embittered me against the Germans, has never blinded my reason.

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[206] *Briefe aus Paris nr.* 74; Ludw. Börne's *Ges. Schr.* (1862) X, 242 ff.

I should indeed not be worthy to enjoy the light of the sun if I repaid God's mercy in letting me be at the same time a German and a Jew with base grumbling,—on account of jeerings which I always disdained, of sufferings which I have long forgotten. No, I know how to value the undeserved good fortune of being a German and at the same time a Jew, of being allowed to strive for all the virtues of the Germans without sharing their defects. Yes, because I was born a slave I love freedom better than you. Yes, because I was born to no fatherland I crave for a fatherland more eagerly than you; and because the place of my birth was not larger than the *Ghetto*, and what was beyond the closed gate was to me a foreign country, now not even a city suffices me, not a district, not a province; only the whole vast fatherland suffices me, as far as its language reaches. And if I had the power, I would not tolerate it that one German tribe should be separated from another by a lane as broad as my hand. If I had the power, I would not tolerate it that a single German word coming from German lips should sound to my ears from beyond the frontier. And because I have ceased to be a slave of my townsfolk, I will no longer be the slave of a prince; wholly free I must be. I pray you, do not look down upon my Jews. If you only were like them, you would be better. If they were only as many as you, they would be better than you. You are thirty millions of Germans, and you count only for thirty in the world. Give us thirty millions of Jews and the world would not count beside them. You have taken away the air from the Jews; but they have been kept thereby from rotting. You have strewn the salt of hatred into their heart; but their heart has been kept fresh thereby. You have locked them the whole long winter in a deep cellar and have stopped up the cellar-door with dirt, but you, freely exposed as you were to the air, are nearly frozen. When spring comes, we shall see who sprouts first, the Jew or the Christian."

One may fully sympathize with all this, and yet feel compelled to acknowledge that neither Heine nor Börne was in a true sense an intellectual leader, that neither Heine nor Börne has added to the store of modern culture a single original thought or a single poetic symbol of the highest life. Their strength was consumed in negation; their mission was fulfilled in fighting the principles of the Holy Alliance, in helping to break down the absolutism of Met-

ternich, in making room again for the ideas which had led to the national revival of 1813.

Börne's democratic feeling.

Börne's strength lay in his passionate, nay, fanatic love of democracy. In all his writings there is nothing more impressive than what he says about the two great dangers which threaten modern society: plutocracy and militarism. No one who has observed intelligently recent developments in the internal affairs of imperial Germany can fail to see the truth of this remarkable prophecy[207]:—"In Prussia they are going to introduce uniforms for all government officials. By this means the government will be entirely separated from the people, patriotism will be changed into blind discipline, a standing army will be created out of the sitting army of clerks. The judges will employ rescripts and verdicts as gunpowder, the associate judges will have to stand sentry, the registrars of the court will do patrol duty at night. The ministry will be a headquarters and every office a guard-room." And in these days of Panama disclosures and whiskey trusts it would be well to remember that only a year after the triumph of the French bourgeoisie in the July Revolution, Börne predicted the downfall of this bourgeoisie as a necessary consequence of its sordid greed.[208] "Woe to the statesmen who are too dull or too bad, not to see that war should be waged, not against the poor, but against poverty. Not the property of the rich, only their monopolies are attacked by the people; but if these monopolies are sheltered by property, how can the people win the equality which is its due otherwise than by storming against property? What shortsightedness to believe that in those countries where the clergy and nobility have lost their privileges eternal peace has been assured! On the contrary, they are nearer the most portentous of revolutions than the countries where there is no freedom yet. In the latter, the fourth

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[207] *Briefe aus Paris nr.* 74; *l. c.* 254. [208] *Ib. nr.* 60; *l. c.* 21 f.

estate is debarred through its neighbour, the bourgeoisie, from a view of the higher, privileged classes. It therefore does not miss equality. But where the bourgeoisie has acquired equality with the higher classes, the fourth estate sees inequality by its side, it becomes aware of its own wretchedness, and sooner or later the war of the poor against the rich must break out."

His intellectual sterility.

It is only in turning from these astute observations of existing evils to Börne's attempts at positive thinking that we become aware of how completely his intellectual energies were exhausted by the incessant and fruitless struggle against the political reaction of his time. When we hear him replying to the well-founded charge of superficial brilliancy[209]: "You call my writings fireworks? Let them be fireworks, if only they make you see that you are living in darkness"; when we hear that he looks forward to Goethe's death as to the birthday of German liberty[210]; when we read again and again that he expects to solve all the problems of social life by the one abstract formula: equality; when we find him in all seriousness proposing to divide the money spent on the library of Göttingen University among an indefinite number of village libraries, or again—as he expresses it[211]—to divide thirty professors into thirty thousand schoolmasters,—then we cannot help seeing in Börne a striking example of the fundamental sterility of thought which is the curse of all fanaticism.

Heine's feeling for Germany.

Of all the accusations raised against Heine, none is more unjust than the oft-repeated assertion that he had no heart for Germany. If anywhere there is a note of deep-felt sadness and longing in Heine's verse, it is in those simple lines on Germany in which, though they were written in a country more friendly to his

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[209] *Briefe aus Paris nr.* 74; *l. c.* 247.
[210] *Ib. nr.* 16; *l. c.* VIII, 117. [211] *Ib. nr.* 103; *l. c.* XII, 44.

genius than his native land, there is hidden a whole life of homelessness and isolation.[212]

Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland.
Der Eichenbaum
Wuchs dort so hoch, die Veilchen nickten sanft.
Es war ein Traum.
Das küsste mich auf deutsch und sprach auf deutsch
(Man glaubt es kaum
Wie gut es klang) das Wort: 'Ich liebe dich!'
Es war ein Traum.

And what writer ever expressed more clearly and more touchingly what he felt and hoped for his people than Heine when, at the end of the *Pictures of Travel* (1826–31),[213] he compares himself to Kunz von Rosen, the court fool of emperor Maximilian. The emperor has been captured by his enemies; his knights and courtiers have deserted him; he is sitting in his lonely prison. Suddenly the door opens, a man wrapped in a mantle enters, and when he throws back his mantle, the emperor recognises his faithful court fool.

"O German fatherland, beloved German people, I am thy Kunz von Rosen. The man whose real office was merry-making, who should have only amused thee in prosperous days, now enters thy dungeon in a time of distress; here, under my mantle I bring thee thy beautiful sceptre and crown,—dost thou not recognise me, my emperor? If I cannot free thee, I will at least comfort thee, and thou shalt have some one with thee who will talk with thee about thy hardships and give thee courage and love thee, and whose best wit and best blood is at thy service. For thou, my people, art the true emperor, thy will is sovereign and much more truly legitimate than the purple 'Tel est notre plaisir' which surrounds itself with a claim of divine right, without any other authority than the babblings of shaven jugglers; thy will, my people, is the only source of power. Though now thou liest

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[212] *In der Fremde; Sämtl. Werke* I, 263. The pathos of these lines becomes doubly apparent when one compares them with the unreflective joyousness of patriotic feeling revealed in such men as Hoffmann von Fallersleben ('Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,' 1841) or Freiligrath.

[213] *Reisebilder* IV; *l. c.* III, 504.

prostrate and in fetters, thy good right will triumph in the end, the day of delivery is near, a new time begins—my emperor, the night is gone, out yonder glows the morning red."

There can be little doubt that these words reflect whatever there was in Heine of true inspiration. Heine had not in vain sat at the feet of Hegel, he was not in vain an ardent admirer of Goethe. There hovered before him, at least in his best years, an ideal of society not unlike the ideal which had inspired the great writers of the days of Weimar and Jena. The much-reviled "emancipation of the flesh," the social programme which united Heine on the one hand with the Saint-Simonians, on the other with Gutzkow, Laube, and the rest of "Young Germany," was after all only a new form of that ideal of free humanity toward which all German culture from Luther to Goethe had tended. And it is one of Heine's lasting achievements to have brought out, in those much-abused and much-appropriated essays *On the History of German Religion and Philosophy* (1834), this inner continuity of the intellectual development of modern Europe. Such characterizations as that of Luther's 'Ein feste Burg' as the *Marseillaise* of the Reformation,[214] of Luther himself as the first complete individual of modern history,[215] of Lessing as the prophet who pointed from the second Testament forward to a third,[216] of Kant as the executioner of deism,[217] of Goethe as the Spinoza of poetry,[218]—to refer only to a few among the many striking passages of this book,—reveal a man who was fully conscious of his own intellectual ancestry, and fully aware of the mission bequeathed by it to himself: the mission of winning the world over to pantheism, "the hidden religion of Germany."[219]

His pantheism.

"The aim of modern life is the rehabilitation of matter, its moral recognition, its religious sanctification, its reconciliation

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[214] *Zur Gesch. d. Rel. u. Philos. in Deutschl.* I; *l. c.* IV, 200.
[215] *Ib.* 190 f.
[216] *Ib.* 243.
[217] *Ib.* 249.
[218] *Ib.* 272.
[219] *Ib.* 222. 224.

with the spirit. God is identical with the world. He manifests himself in the plants which without consciousness lead a cosmic-magnetic life. He manifests himself in the animals, which in their sensual dream-life feel a more or less dumb existence. But most gloriously he manifests himself in man, who both feels and thinks, who perceives the difference between himself and nature and who bears in his own reason the ideas which are revealed to him in the world of appearances. In man God reaches self-consciousness, and through man he reveals this self-consciousness; not in and through the individual man, but in and through the whole of mankind ; so that, while the individual man conceives and represents only a part of the God-universe, all men together conceive and represent the whole God-universe in idea and reality. God, therefore, is the true hero of the world's history. The latter is his continual thinking, speaking, doing; and of all mankind it can truly be said that it is an incarnation of God.—It is a mistake to believe that this religion of pantheism will lead men to indifference. On the contrary, the consciousness of his divinity will inspire man to manifest himself as divine ; and thus will be brought on an age when the true exploits of true heroism will magnify this earth. We battle not for the human rights but for the divine rights of man."

Could the innermost creed of the poets and thinkers who had created the new Germany, could the life-work of a Lessing, Herder, Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Goethe, be expressed more eloquently or more plainly? Could a Walt Whitman have spoken more enthusiastically of the tasks and the triumphs which await the human race after its final emancipation from a belief which exalts one part of man only to degrade the other, and which degrades the world of appearances in order to exalt an invisible and extramundane God?

His surrender to the reaction.

It is just at this point that we see the fatal defect, the essential barrenness of Heine's life. This man who could speak so fervently of the ideals of existence never placed his genius in the service of these ideals. His whole career is poisoned by a fundamental falsehood. Having been born a Jew, and living in the era of the Restoration, he is forced through his social and politi-

cal surroundings into an act of treason against himself. He abjures the faith of his ancestors and adopts the outward form of a creed which he inwardly despises. Thus he enters the literary arena with the secret stigma of desertion upon him. And when we come to cast the balance of his life, we find that, with all his noble sympathies and aspirations, he was at the end—or shall we not rather say: from the beginning? —religiously, politically, and even artistically a renegade.

Who would refuse human compassion to his last years? Who would not marvel at the brilliant shafts of wit, imagination, and feeling which flashed forth from this poor sufferer as he lay in one long death-agony in his "mattress-grave" of the Rue d'Amsterdam? Who would doubt for one moment the sincerity of the religious recantation to which under these circumstances he felt himself compelled? There is something infinitely naïve and pathetic in that often retold tale of his, how on a May day of 1848, the day on which he went out for the last time, he took leave of the "sweet idols" which he had worshipped in the days of happiness.[220] "Hardly could I drag myself as far as the Louvre, and I almost broke down when I entered the sublime hall where the blessed goddess of beauty, our Dear Lady of Milo, stands on her pedestal. For a long time I lay at her feet and wept so bitterly that a stone would have taken pity on me. And the goddess looked compassionately down upon me, but at the same time disconsolately as though she wanted to say: Dost thou not see that I have no arms and therefore cannot help thee?" Here we see clearly what it was that drove Heine back into the fold of a theistic creed. It was the helplessness of a man incapable of living up to his ideals under severe trial, it was the defenselessness of a man who had

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[220] *Nachwort zum Romanzero; l. c.* I, 487. The proof for Heine's religious recantation is contained chiefly in three documents written between 1851 and 54: (1) The *Nachwort* just mentioned; (2) the introduction to the second edition of *Zur Gesch. d. Rel. u. Phil.* (*l. c.* IV, 154 ff.); (3) the *Geständnisse* (*l. c.* VI, 15 ff.).

never trained his powers in self-denying devotion to a common cause. And we cannot be surprised that even behind his last conversion there lurks that sterile Mephistophelean smile which robs even the finest feeling of its moral worth.

"Yes," he says,[221] "I did return to God like the prodigal son, after having for a long time herded swine with the Hegelians. A heavenly homesickness came over me and drove me on through forests and glens, over the most giddy mountain-paths of dialectics. On my way I found the God of the pantheists, but I could make no use of him. This poor, dreamy being is interwoven and entangled with the world, imprisoned in it, as it were, and yawns at you indolently and powerlessly. To have a will one must be a person, to manifest one's will one must have elbow-room. If you want a God who can help—and that after all is the main thing,—you must accept his personality, his extramundaneity, and all his holy attributes. If you accept this, then the immortality of the soul, your own continuance after death, is given to you into the bargain, as it were, like the marrow-bone which the butcher pushes into his customer's basket, if he is pleased with him. Such a nice marrow-bone is called in the language of the French cuisine *la réjouissance*, and you make from it an excellent bouillon which is most refreshing and stimulating for the poor sick people. That I did not refuse such a *réjouissance*, but on the contrary took to it with great relish, every feeling soul will understand."

Contrast with Goethe.

We can think of no better way of refuting such blasphemous godliness as this than to quote a word of the master of whom Heine was, it is not too harsh to say it, an unworthy disciple. Less than a month before his death, looking back upon a life full of restless striving, full of pain and joy, Goethe wrote[222]: "I have always sought to understand as fully as possible what can be known, understood, applied; and in this I have succeeded in such a manner as to please myself and others even. Herein I have now been brought

[221] *Nachwort zum Romanzero; l. c.* I, 485.

[222] Letter to Sulpiz Boisserée, Febr. 25, 1832; S. B., *Briefwechsel mit Goethe, p.* 591.

to a limit; so that I begin to believe where others despair: namely those who, because they cannot reach beyond the limits set to man, consider the highest achievements of mankind as naught. Thus we are driven from the individual to the whole, and from the whole to the individual, whether we will or not." Goethe, in other words, remained faithful to the modern ideal of humanity, because his very doubt was at bottom constructive and reverent; Heine denounced this ideal, because his very belief was at bottom negative and frivolous.

Politically, Heine never stooped to so sweeping a disavowal of his own convictions. From that enthusiastic apotheosis of freedom in the *Reisebilder*,[223] in which he claims for his coffin not a laurel wreath but a sword—"for I was a brave soldier in the war of human emancipation"—down to one of the last poems of the *Romanzero* (1851),[224] in which he calls himself an *enfant perdu* of the liberal army, he never ceased to insist on his republican sympathies. And when the biting reflections upon the political reaction in Prussia, to which he gave vent in *Deutschland ein Wintermärchen* (1844),[225] were misconstrued into a malicious attack upon the land of his birth, he was fully justified in drawing a distinction[226] between "the old official Germany, the mouldering land of the Philistines, which has, however, produced no Goliath, not a single great man," and "the real Germany, the great, mysterious, one might say anonymous Germany of the German people, the sleeping sovereign with whose sceptre and crown the apes are playing." And yet it must be said that here too he entirely lacked that stability, seriousness, and trust in the radical goodness of human nature which alone give moral dignity to democratic convictions. A man who abandoned what he called atheism, because he

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[223] *Reisebilder* III, 29–31; *l. c.* III, 273 ff.

[224] *Romanzero* II, 20; *l. c.* I, 430.

[225] Cf. especially *c.* 3. 18; *l. c.* II, 434 ff. 468 ff.

[226] *Sämtl. W.* IV, 155.

saw[227] that "atheism began to stink of cheese, brandy, and tobacco"; a man who said[228] that "he would wash his hands if the sovereign people should honour him with a handshake"; who could make fun of popular distress by saying[229]: "We must see to it that the sovereign people always has something to eat; as soon as Its Majesty is well fed and filled, it will smile at you most graciously, just like the other Majesties,"—such a man cannot expect to be classed with the true friends of the people.

And finally, as to his art, nothing could be more significant for Heine's character than that this greatest lyric genius since Goethe should have produced hardly a single poem which fathoms the depths of life. This master in the art of poetic hypnotizing hardly ever sets free our higher self. This brilliant painter of nature, who with a few careless touches charms a whole landscape before our eyes, who is as much at home on the lonely downs of the North Sea as in the mountain wilderness of the Pyrenees,[230] hardly ever allows us a glimpse into the mysterious brooding and moving of nature's creative forces. This accomplished *connoisseur* of the human heart, this expert of human desires, hardly ever reveals the secret of true love. This philosophic apostle of a complete and harmonious humanity revels as a poet in exposing his own unharmonious, fickle, scoffing, petulant self. And one of the most perfect artistic achievements of this enthusiast for popular freedom is a glorification of military bravado, an apotheosis of the man of Austerlitz and Moscow.[231]

Is it too much to say that of all the writers of his time Heine is the saddest example of the intellectual degenera-

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[227] *Geständnisse; l. c.* VI, 41.

[228] *Ib.* 42.

[229] *Ib.* 43. Cf. G. Brandes, *Das junge Deutschland p.* 131 ff.

[230] Cf. *Die Nordsee* (*l. c.* I, 163 ff.) and *Atta Troll c.* 13. 15. 16. 17. 20. (*l. c.* II, 381 ff.).

[231] *Die Grenadiere; l. c.* I, 39.

tion wrought by the political principles of the age of the Restoration?

2. The Victory of Liberalism.

We have seen how the era of great constructive ideas which led to the national uprising of 1813 was followed, after 1815, by an epoch of political and intellectual reaction. We observed some of the effects of this reaction upon literature: the absence of truly leading men, the revival of a capricious and morbid subjectivism, the renewal of the Romantic flight into the mysterious and the distant, the prevalence of merely negative views of public life. But we have not yet completed our review of the Restoration epoch. We have not yet considered the last achievements of the two men who, although essentially belonging to a former age, must nevertheless be thought of as the true intellectual leaders of this age also: Goethe and Hegel.

Goethe from 1806 to 1815.

It would be a futile undertaking to palliate the fact that the most glorious epoch of modern German history, the period of inner regeneration preceding the overthrow of the Napoleonic yoke, was at the same time the least inspiring epoch in the life of Germany's greatest poet. Here, as in all questions touching the relation of a great man to his time, one should be careful to refrain from personal incriminations. It was probably impossible for Goethe, the man who harboured within himself a world of culture destined to be the spiritual home of future generations,—it was probably impossible for him to feel as deeply as his contemporaries did the death-agony of the old social order. And yet there is something uncanny, something one might say inhuman, in the quiet and composure with which Goethe lives through the succession of national catastrophes from 1806 to 1815. While the country is quivering under the blows of Jena and Tilsit, Goethe calmly pursues his studies in biology and the theory of colours. While Fichte and Heinrich von Kleist wring from themselves works of oratory

and poetic inspiration in which there vibrates the deepest passion of a people imbued with the conviction that the moment for a final supreme effort of self-preservation has come, Goethe is held in the spell of *Pandora* (1807) and *The Elective Affinities* (1809), themes utterly devoid of national motives. And when at last the fulfilment of time has indeed come, when the people rise, when the foreign conqueror is put to flight, Goethe is shocked rather than stirred: the touching ovation given to him by the Lützow volunteers, which was narrated in another connection,[232] took place while he was on his way to the Bohemian summer resorts, trying to escape from what seemed to him a rude overturning of peaceful culture. Indeed, there is a deep pathos in the fact that the principal character of the play with which Goethe in 1815 celebrated the final triumph of the German cause should have been a dim figure of Greek antiquity — Epimenides, the legendary sage who awakens from a sleep of long years to find himself alone among a people whose battles he has not fought, whose pangs he has not shared.[233]

With all this, even *Pandora* and *The Elective Affinities* are a part of the national regeneration that led to 1813.

Pandora.

Nowhere has Goethe more emphatically condemned the reckless individualism of early Romanticism than in these two works. In *Pandora* he seems to retract the revolutionary aspirations of his own youth. In his youth he had magnified the Titans as rebels against the autocracy of Olympus; now he magnifies the Olympians as the upholders of divine order. The Titans represent what is partial and one-sided,—Prometheus the active,

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232 Cf. *supra p.* 491 f.

233 Cf. *Des Epimenides Erwachen* 23; *Werke* XI, 1, *p.* 196:

Doch schäm' ich mich der Ruhestunden,
Mit euch zu leiden war Gewinn;
Denn für den Schmerz den ihr empfunden,
Seid ihr auch grösser als ich bin.

Epimetheus the meditative phase of life; only through an amalgamation of both can the true life be obtained. Pandora, the child of the Gods, preserves this highest life in her magic vessel. Through her the conflicts of the Titans are appeased; through her a reign of beauty, goodness, and joy is initiated. And the human offspring of the Titans are united in the worship of universal harmony[234]—

> Was zu wünschen ist, ihr unten fühlt es;
> Was zu geben sei, die wissen's droben.
> Gross beginnet ihr Titanen, aber leiten
> Zu dem ewig Guten, ewig Schönen,
> Ist der Götter Werk; die lasst gewähren!

Die Wahlverwandtschaften.

While *Pandora* thus, in allegorical visions of rare translucency and wealth of colour, reveals human effort lifted into the sphere of the divine, there rises before us in *The Elective Affinities* a tragic conflict between elemental instinct and the moral law. In Gottfried's *Tristan* we saw the conventions of chivalric society give way before a resistless passion; here we see modern culture, developed to the highest intellectual and æsthetic refinement, undermined by moral indifference. Over *The Elective Affinities* as over *Tristan* there hangs a sultry, stifling atmosphere. No tasks of public import; no questions of national honour or greatness; the whole of life a mere pastime. No wonder that Eduard like Tristan becomes the prey of an all-absorbing desire; no wonder that a blind fatalism governs most of the characters in the modern as well as in the mediæval romance. And yet what a difference in the ultimate significance of the two creations; what a difference, above all, in the attitude of the two principal heroines! In the whole career of Isolt after she has partaken of the magic love-potion there is not a single act of moral freedom. Passion has truly enchanted her; she has lost all sense of responsibility; she has become incapable of

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[234] Last verses of *Pandora*; *Werke* X, 382.

distinguishing between good and evil. Ottilie, on the contrary, through the very instinct which brings her into conflict with the law of society, is rendered mistress of herself; and what threatens to lead to utter moral ruin ends by leading to moral victory. Ottilie is one of those sensitive natures to whom all knowledge comes by intuition, none through reflection; who act only under the stress of an irresistible impulse. Sure of her own feelings for Eduard, assured moreover that Eduard and Charlotte desire nothing more fervently than a divorce, she does not question the legitimacy of her feelings. Thus she lives on, in her dreamy, plantlike fashion, welcoming every opportunity to meet her beloved, turning to him as to the light of day, unconscious of the catastrophe that awaits them both. But all of a sudden she comes to see that she has unwittingly sinned, and henceforth her only thought is expiation.[235] "I have transgressed my sphere, I have broken my law, I shudder at myself, I shall never be his. In a terrible way God has opened my eyes and made me see my crime. I shall atone for it, I shall atone for it." She renounces the world, she is going to devote herself to the instruction of the young; for who is better fitted for guiding the young than he who through misfortune has come to know the joy of self-possession? And when she is thwarted even in this through Eduard's mad design to win her at any cost, there is nothing left her but to die. She dies like a saint, by the mere resolve not to live, passing over gradually and placidly into the sphere of the spiritual.

Goethe's old age.

No period of Goethe's life is fuller of moral incentive, richer in spiritual visions, fraught with greater national significance than his last seventeen years, from the end of the Napoleonic wars to 1832. The restoration of peace, the hope for a new era of national greatness bring back to the septuagenarian all the joyfulness and vigour

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[235] *Wahlverw.* II, 14; *Werke* XV, 223. Cf. A. Schöll, *Goethe p.* 398 ff.

of his youth; and at the same time there rests on him the halo of deeper wisdom and broader sympathies acquired in the trials of his manhood. Whatever there was of earthy dross in his nature seems now to have been cast aside. His whole being seems illumined, and he seems to illumine whatever comes within his ken. Whether it be the development of his own genius as portrayed in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811 ff.); or the manifold correlations of physical conditions and national culture as brought to light in the *Italian Journey* (1816–17); whether it be the analysis—in *Kunst und Altertum* (1816–28), in his correspondence with Sulpiz Boisserée or Zelter—of some mediæval cathedral, of some painting by the Van Eycks or Mantegna; or the tranquil contemplation—in the *Maximen und Reflexionen*, [236] in his conversations with Eckermann, Riemer, and others—of some natural phenomenon, some literary masterpiece, some phase of human conduct; be it the poetic confession of faith, in the *Westöstlicher Divan* (1814–19), of a man who to the very end of his life drinks in the joys of existence, in whom the sunset, the clouds, the winds, the glance of a beautiful eye, the sound of a gentle voice, call forth melodies of deepest power, and who at the same time feels that "to be a man is to be a warrior," [237] that "to die and to be reborn" [238] is the great task of life:—everywhere we see the same conception of the universe as a grand living whole, the

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[236] Edited under the title *Sprüche in Prosa* by Loeper; *Werke* XIX. Cf. Bailey Saunders, *Goethe's Maxims and Reflections.*

[237] Cf. *Westöstl. Divan* XII, 4; *Werke* IV, 211:

> Nicht so vieles Federlesen!
> Lass mich immer nur herein:
> Denn ich bin ein Mensch gewesen
> Und das heisst ein Kämpfer sein.

[238] *Ib.* I, 18; *l. c.* 27:

> Und so lang du das nicht hast,
> Dieses: Stirb und werde!
> Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
> Auf der dunklen Erde.

same loving tenderness for all that draws breath, the same divine trust in the ever-ascending and ever-widening path of human perfection.

> Was kann der Mensch im Leben mehr gewinnen,
> Als dass sich Gott-Natur ihm offenbare,
> Wie sie das Feste lässt zu Geist zerrinnen,
> Wie sie das Geisterzeugte fest bewahre![239]

It was in this state of mind, it was in the spirit of a joyous pantheism, in the firm belief in the power of the human mind to transform matter, in the divinatory anticipation of social conditions which shall be perfect embodiments of a perfect manhood, that Goethe returned to the two great themes of his early career. In *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1821. 29) and the Second Part of *Faust* (1832) he gave to the world his last message and his final legacy.

In *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and the First Part of *Faust*, as we have seen before,[240] Goethe had given a typical expression to that most vital of eighteenth-century ideals, to the striving for completeness of individual culture. But Goethe was more than a poetic interpreter of eighteenth-century ideals. Not in vain had he lived through the years of national humiliation following so closely upon the classic days of individual culture; not in vain had he witnessed the birth of a new national life out of most extraordinary trials and sacrifices. He had come to see that subordination of the individual to the collective tasks of national culture, that the organization of the masses, that the regulation of public service would be the supreme problem of the future. And now, at a time when all that had been gained in those years of national reconstruction seemed again to be lost, when a most vicious system of political as well as religious reaction seemed to bring back the worst days of

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[239] *Bei Betrachtung von Schillers Schädel*, 17. *Sept.* 1826; *Werke* III, 191. For other lyric expressions of Goethe's pantheism cf. *Prooemion*, *Weltseele*, *Eins und Alles*; *Werke* II, 223–26.

[240] Cf. *supra p.* 355 ff. 362 ff.

aristocratic class rule, he once more arose as the prophet of a free and exalted humanity: he pointed forward to the ultimate triumph of democracy through universal self-surrender.

It is needless to say that neither *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* nor the Second Part of *Faust* is a representation of life as it is. Both are symbolic suggestions of what to the aged Goethe was the life to be striven for. They may be called utopian. But in calling them so, let us not forget that the whole history of civilization is a continual struggle for the realization of ideas which before they won the support of the majority were considered utopian. And who can fail to see that no small part of what is dimly outlined in these poetic visions of Goethe's last years has already been transformed into living reality?

Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre.

If the principal theme of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* was individual culture, the principal theme of the *Wanderjahre* is society well organized. There the watchword was universality, unchecked development, variety of experience, fulness of the inner life; here the watchword is specialization, discipline, renunciation, doing! There we saw the transition from the old regime of hereditary aristocracy to the new aristocracy of the spirit; here we see the transformation of this spiritual aristocracy into a democracy of fellow workers.

Each of the three books into which the *Wanderjahre* is divided contains, among much that is irrelevant and capricious, at least one important stage of this development.

The first leads us from that charming apotheosis of handicraft, the idyllic story of *St. Joseph the Second*,[241] through the reflections of Jarno the naturalist, into the sphere of "The Uncle," the embodiment of American

[241] Chapters 1 and 2. Like most of the novelettes inserted into the main narrative of the *Wanderjahre*, this story was written long before the composition of the whole: about 1799. In nearly all these novelettes the underlying idea is some form of renunciation.

common-sense and enterprise combined with European culture.[242] Its essence may be summed up in the words of Jarno[243]:

"Many-sidedness prepares only the element in which the one-sided can work. Now is the time for the one-sided; well for him who comprehends it, and who works for himself and others in this spirit. Practice till you are an able violinist, and be assured that the director will have pleasure in assigning you a place in the orchestra. Make an instrument of yourself, and wait and see what sort of place humanity will grant you in universal life. Everywhere one needs to serve from the ranks upward. To limit one's self to one craft is best. To the narrow mind it will be nothing but a craft; to the more intelligent an art; and the best, when he does one thing, does everything—or, to be less paradoxical, in the one thing which he does rightly he beholds the semblance of everything that is rightly done."

Nowhere is the contrast between the *Lehrjahre* and the *Wanderjahre*, between Goethe the individualist and Goethe the collectivist, more clearly marked than in the principles of education set forth in each of these works. The fundamental lesson of the *Lehrjahre* is that in order to be a cultivated individual you must tread the labyrinthine path of mistakes and aberrations. The fundamental lesson of the *Wanderjahre* is that in order to be a useful member of society you must choose the straight road of systematic drill. Wilhelm, in the *Lehrjahre*, took the former; his son Felix, in the second book of the *Wanderjahre*, is made to take the latter. Of course, this drill is not of the sort which blunts individuality. On the contrary, like Fichte's system of national education, it is to raise individuality to a higher standard, to give the individual a clearer sense of his faculties and his limitations, to impart to him a deeper knowledge of the whole order of life which is the condition of his own existence. The classic expression of this spirit is the famous chapter of the "Three Reverences," which

[242] Chapters 5 to 7.

[243] *Wanderj.* I, 4; *Werke* XVIII, 55.

found such an ardent admirer in Carlyle. On entering the "Pedagogic Province," the hallowed precinct where his son is to be educated, Wilhelm observes that he is greeted by the assembled youth with strange and varied gestures. The youngest children cross their arms on their breasts and look upward; the older ones hold their arms behind them and look to the ground; the oldest place themselves in a row, and, standing erect, with arms at their sides, turn their heads to the right. Wilhelm inquires what these gestures signify, and he receives the answer[244]: Reverence, a threefold reverence!

"The first is reverence for that which is above us. That gesture, the arms folded on the breast, a cheerful glance toward the sky, that is what we prescribe to our untutored children, requiring thereby witness of them that there is a God on high who reflects himself in our parents, tutors, and superiors. The second, reverence for that which is below us. The hands folded on the back as if tied together, the lowered, smiling glance, bespeak that we have to regard the earth carefully and cheerfully; it gives us an opportunity to maintain ourselves; it affords unspeakable joys; but it brings disproportionate sufferings. If one hurts one's self bodily, whether through a fault or innocently; if others hurt one, intentionally or accidentally; if earthly chance does one any harm, let that be carefully thought of; for such danger accompanies us all our life long. But from this condition we deliver our pupil as quickly as possible: as soon as we are convinced that the teachings of this stage have made a sufficient impression upon him. Then we bid him be a man, look to his companions, and guide himself with reference to them. Now he stands erect and bold, yet not selfishly isolated; only in union with his equals does he present a brave front to the world. We are unable to add anything further."

The third book, finally, brings the consummation of Wilhelm's career through his joining, as a physician, that little band of travelling mechanics whom Goethe seems to have meant as prophetic types of a coming era of industrial organization and international fraternity. To be at home

[244] *Wanderj.* II, 1; *l. c.* 164 f.

wherever you can serve; to be an apostle of peace, a pioneer of civilization among whatever people, in whatever clime; to consider your own property as a trust to be administered for the benefit of the community; to respect all creeds, to respect all governments as more or less perfect expressions of the supreme law; but at the same time to work for the coming of a world-religion and a world-republic; to hope for a future when mankind shall have reached such a state of spirituality that it will feel itself truly one with the universal spirit which controls all solar systems[245]:—these are the ideals in which Wilhelm's restless search for culture finds a lasting satisfaction. Truly, like Saul the son of Kish, he had gone out to find his father's asses, and he found a kingdom.[246]

The Second Part of Faust.

The same gospel of renunciation and deed which forms the climax of Wilhelm Meister's development is the condition of the final salvation of Faust. As we have seen before,[247] this gospel is heard even in the first part of the drama; it is implied in the very contract by which Faust binds himself to Mephisto. Its full application, however, it receives only in the second part.

There is, at the beginning of the fourth act, a scene of marvellous power and beauty, in which Faust, stepping forth from the clouds that have borne him over land and sea, alights on a lonely mountain-peak. Gazing at the changing forms of the nebulous masses as they roll away, he sees in them images of the two women to whom the best of his life belongs: Gretchen and Helena; and he pours

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[245] A symbolic anticipation of this state is the mysterious figure of Makarie. Cf. *Wanderj.* III, 14. 15; *l. c.* 404 ff.—An excellent analysis of the ideals of life held out in the *Wanderjahre* in Ferd. Gregorovius, *Goethe's Wilh. Meister in s. socialistischen Elementen p.* 85 ff.

[246] Cf. Eckermann, *Gespr.* I, 135.

[247] Cf. *supra p.* 364 ff.

out his feelings for them in words full of sublimest passion[248]:

> Down gazing on the deepest solitudes below,
> I tread deliberately this summit's lonely edge,
> Relinquishing my cloudy car, which hither bore
> Me softly through the shining day o'er land and sea.
> Unscattered, slowly moved, it separates from me.
> Off eastward strives the mass with rounded, rolling march:
> And strives the eye, amazed, admiring, after it.
> In motion it divides, in wave-like, changeful guise;
> Yet seems to shape a figure.—Yes! mine eyes not err!
> On sun-illumined pillows beauteously reclined,
> Colossal, truly, but a godlike woman-form
> I see! The like of Juno, Leda, Helena,
> Majestically lovely, floats before my sight!
> Ah, now 'tis broken! Towering broad and formlessly,
> It rests along the east like distant icy hills,
> And shapes the grand significance of fleeting days.
> Yet still there clings a light and delicate band of mist
> Around my breast and brow, caressing, cheering me.
> Now light, delayingly, it soars and higher soars,
> And folds together.—Cheats me an ecstatic form,
> As early-youthful, long-foregone and highest bliss?
> The first glad treasures of my deepest heart break forth;
> Aurora's love, so light of pinion, is its type,
> The swiftly-felt, the first, scarce-comprehended glance,
> Outshining every treasure, when retained and held.
> Like spiritual beauty mounts the gracious form,
> Dissolving not, but lifts itself through ether far,
> And from my inner being bears the best away.

Gretchen had been the Aurora of Faust's existence. The humble German burgher-maiden, the naïve child of the people, all tenderness, all simplicity, all love, had opened before him a world of undefiled beauty and grace. His own frenzy destroyed this world, and now he has to live the long, cheerless day of lonely struggle. Now there rises before him the ideal form of another woman : Helena, the

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[248] *Faust II*, 10039 ff.

brilliant Greek heroine, the representative of classic culture, the symbol of a life devoted to freedom and progress.

The Faust of the Gretchen tragedy, with all his sublime feelings, with all his noble aspirations, was nevertheless essentially a gigantic egotist. The Faust of the Second Part, with all his thirst for power, with all his craving for self-expansion, is nevertheless essentially a worker for humanity. The former felt, even in the arms of Gretchen, the curse of a consuming desire upon him[249]:

> I am the fugitive, all houseless roaming,
> The monster without aim or rest,
> That like a cataract, down rocks and gorges foaming,
> Leaps, maddened, into the abyss's breast.

The latter has come to feel that, while

> The thrill of awe is man's best quality,[250]

"enjoyment makes vulgar"[251]; and, dying, he proclaims the redeeming power of ceaseless endeavour[252]:

> Yes! to this thought I hold with firm persistence;
> The last result of wisdom stamps it true:
> He only earns his freedom and existence
> Who daily conquers them anew.

In other words, he finds the ideal life in making even the receptive part of his nature subservient to moral aims, in blending the highest spiritual culture with the most intense and the most unselfish practical activity.

The Second Part of *Faust* is a triumphal song of civilization; it is a glorification of individual culture hallowed through devotion to collective tasks. Isolation, selfishness, negation, destroy themselves. Homunculus,[252a] the per-

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[249] *Faust I*, 3348 ff.

[250] *Faust II*, 6272.

[251] *Ib.* 10259.

[252] *Ib.* 11573 ff.

[252a] For the part played by Homunculus in the economy of the drama, especially with regard to Helena, cf. V. Valentin, *Homunkulus und Helena; Goethe-Jahrb.* XVI, 127 ff. For Helena cf. J. Niejahr, *Euphorion*, I, 81 ff.

sonified desire for individual life, loses his individuality at the very moment that he reaches true existence. Euphorion, the embodiment of uncontrolled fancy and reckless aspiration, while presuming to soar to inaccessible heights, falls helpless to the ground. Mephisto, the arch-scoffer and deceiver, is defeated, because he has no conception of the all-conquering power of a steadfast purpose. Faust is saved, because he makes every new experience a stepping-stone for a higher and more complete form of existence. Sin itself seems to have ennobled him. After he has seen Gretchen in the dungeon, after he has been overwhelmed, at the sight of her fate, by "mankind's collected woe,"[253] he seems to be raised above all lower desire. Henceforth his life belongs to the world at large, and every new temptation he turns into an opportunity for wider activity. As statesman, as general, nay, even in the fantastic pursuit of Helena, he appears as a man who has espoused the cause of human happiness. In the last two acts he is clearly a spokesman of Liberalism, a stanch opponent of the principles which guided the policy of the Holy Alliance. The Emperor and his satellites, as representatives of the political and religious reaction which set in after 1815, see in the pacification of the empire, brought about through Faust, nothing but a chance for re-establishing their own feudal privileges; Faust builds upon it plans of social reform and popular enterprise which seem a prophecy of the time when millions of German emigrants were to take part in the peaceful conquests of the great republic beyond the sea. He dies as a champion of democracy. His last vision is that of a free people living on a free soil[254]:

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[253] *Faust I,* 4406.

[254] *Faust II,* 11563 ff.—One might say that in this vision of the dying Faust and in the final philosophy of Voltaire's Candide—"il faut cultiver notre jardin" (*Œuvres Compl.* XXI, 218)—there are typified both the affinity and the contrast between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.

To many millions let me furnish soil,
Though not secure, yet free to active toil;
Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth
At once, with comfort, on the newest earth,
And swiftly settled on the hill's firm base,
Created by the bold, industrious race.
A land like Paradise here, round about:
Up to the brink the tide may roar without,
And though it gnaw, to burst with force the limit,
By common impulse all unite to hem it.—
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day.
And such a throng I fain would see,—
Stand on free soil among a people free!
Then dare I hail the moment fleeing:
'Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!'
The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,
In æons perish,—they are there!—
In proud forefeeling of such lofty bliss,
I now enjoy the highest moment,—this.

Hegel.

Only a few months after Goethe had brought his life's work to a close—he himself considered the days left to him after the completion of *Faust* as a "pure gift"[255]—there died (in November, 1831) the philosopher whose name must be placed by the side of Goethe's as that of the other great leader from the era of the Holy Alliance to the Revolution of 1848.

The Phänomenologie des Geistes.

It cannot be denied that Hegel in a certain sense was himself a part of the inglorious reaction which in the decades following the Congress of Vienna threatened to blot out the ideas of national freedom and greatness that had led to the uprising of 1813. It must be admitted that he was, as a thinker, a worshipper of scholastic formulas; as a man, a worshipper of the powers that be. In his early manhood he had witnessed the downfall of Prussia, the annihilation of the German empire under the footsteps of the foreign conqueror. But even less than

[255] Cf. Eckermann, *Gespr.* II, 237.

Goethe had he been stirred by this sight to patriotic indignation and activity. While the battle of Jena was being fought, nay, within the very hearing of the thunder of its cannon, he had finished his first remarkable book, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1806). But in vain would you listen in this book for an echo, however faint, of the great catastrophe in the midst of which it was written. While every stone of the tottering edifice of the German state seemed to call out the truth that it is the will and not the intellect which builds the world, Hegel fancied that he was drawing a true picture of reality by representing it as a succession of varying degrees of self-comprehension, by dissolving the history of human culture into a kaleidoscopic show of shifting intellectual moods. While every new day seemed to be an added proof that it was overstrained intellectuality which was plunging the nation into defeat after defeat, Hegel persisted in seeing the essence of life in dialectic abstractions, in proclaiming as the highest existence—not fullest activity, but "absolute knowledge."

Hegel as a reactionist.

Indeed, it is not surprising that a man who had so little feeling for the concrete forces and struggles of national life as the author of the *Phenomenology* should have found it easy to make himself a tool of despotism. It is not surprising that he should have spoken of Napoleon as the "world-soul"[256]; that he should have prevailed upon himself to edit, in the midst of his country's degradation through Napoleon, a Napoleonic newspaper[257]; that he should have discountenanced, after the War of Liberation, the movement to obtain parliamentary government; that he should have characterized the people in contradistinction from the government as "that part of the state which does not know its own will"[258]; that he should have

[256] Cf. K. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben p.* 229.

[257] Thus R. Haym, *Hegel u. s. Zeit p.* 272, characterizes the spirit in which Hegel from 1807 to 8 managed the *Bamberger Zeitung.*

[258] *Philosophie des Rechts* (1821) § 301; *Werke* VIII, 386.

stooped to unworthy compromises of his own, essentially liberal thought with the divine right of kings and the infallible authority of the church ; that he should have ended in a fanatic admiration of Prussian bureaucracy as the most perfect embodiment of organized public intelligence.[259]

Hegel's collectivism.

With all this, the Hegelian philosophy has fulfilled a great and noble mission in the history of modern culture. If it has created no new ideals of life, it has reconstructed the old ; it has systematized the whole complex of ideas to which it had fallen heir ; it has been a vessel of preservation and an instrument of reconstruction for the pantheistic thought of Herder, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher ; it has been—to say it in a word—the first comprehensive attempt to make the collectivistic view of life the key for the interpretation of the universe.

Hegel looks at the world not from the standpoint of the individual, but from the standpoint of the absolute mind. Indeed, the individual does not exist for him except as a part of the absolute mind. All life is to him a continual, endless self-unfolding of the infinite ; it is comprised in the eternal circle of unity, differentiation, and return to unity (or, as Hegel expresses it, of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis). The finite is the infinite on its way from mere identity with itself to organic complexity. Nature is mind on its way from an abstract and, as it were, empty self-consciousness to a self-consciousness fraught with the fulness of life. "The rational is real, and the real is rational"[260]; everything is a phase, a necessary phase, in the one all-absorbing struggle of life : the struggle of the divine spirit to attain, through differentiation, negation, contradiction, destruction, to the most complete realization of itself.[260a]

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[259] Cf. the *Kritik der engl. Reformbill ; Werke* XVII, 425 ff.

[260] Words from the Preface to the *Philos. d. R.; Werke* VIII, 17.

[260a] The same decade, 1820–30, which brought the Hegelian system to its final completion, matured in Alexander von Humboldt that comprehensive conception of the physical universe which found its

The human mind is the highest form of the divine spirit accessible to our understanding; man's consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness: these are the premises which led Hegel to a theory of public life which cannot but be called a deification of the state and of human history. The state is not, as Rousseau thought, the result of a contract between individuals; it exists before and above the individuals. It is the divine will itself embodied in human will, it is reason made manifest, the infinite personified.[261] It is its own aim; that is, its office is not to further individual interests, to protect private property—these and similar functions of the state are merely incidental and subordinate—its real office is to be an embodiment of the organic unity of public life. The highest task of the individual is to co-operate in making this embodiment complete. The highest freedom is service to the state. And what constitutes the measure of human progress? Who are the true heroes of the world's history? There is only one true hero of the world's history, and that is the idea of humanity itself. Individual men, nay, even individual nations, are nothing but organs of this universal idea; and the only measure of their greatness is to be found in their fitness to embody this idea.

His view of the state and of history.

Hegel sees in history a continual progress toward freedom, and he distinguishes three great epochs in this development: the Oriental, the Græco-Roman, and the Germanic. In the first epoch only one was free, in the second some were free, in the third all are free.[262] But it is clear that by freedom Hegel understands, not individual independence, but rather universal responsibility; that the climax of human development is to

His idea of freedom.

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final form in his *Kosmos* (1845–58, first outlined in public lectures delivered at Berlin 1827–28).

[261] Cf. *Philos. d. R.* § 257 f. 273; *l. c.* 305 ff. 352. Lévy-Bruhl, *l'Allemagne depuis Leibniz p.* 388 ff.

[262] Cf. *Philosophie der Geschichte, Einl.; Werke* IX, 23 f.

him, not highest individual culture, but rather the most fully organized and the widest reaching collective consciousness. The individuals are sacrificed, the idea of the whole lives on; and only by living in and for this idea may the individual be admitted to a share in its immortality.

Whatever may be said about the technical foundations of this system of thought, it is impossible to resist the inspiring breath that emanates from it. Even as a mere dream of the world it is one of the most consistent views of the world ever conceived. It seems to open the whole universe, to solve every riddle, to shed a light of eternity even upon the most fleeting, to hallow even the most humble life by connecting it with the life of the infinite spirit. It makes the world an evolution of the divine; it sees in human society an organism whose principal function is the living out of the universal idea; it finds the goal of human progress in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. It is Christianity secularized.

The essential liberalism of the Hegelian system.

It will now be seen in what sense the aged Goethe and Hegel must be called the true representatives of German culture in the era of the Restoration. While the majority of their contemporaries either stooped to a blind worship of the divine right of kings as embodied in the men of the Holy Alliance, or wasted their strength in capricious and spasmodic attacks against the ruling system, or again submitted to existing conditions with the impotent defiance of blighted hope, Goethe and Hegel, although not entirely free from the contagion of a diseased age, yet in the main stood faithfully by the great national traditions of the generation of 1813; and the whole intellectual development of Germany from 1830 to 1848 may be said to consist in the gradual ascendency and final triumph of the ideas of public life contained in the Hegelian philosophy and the Second Part of *Faust*.

The development from 1830 to 1848.

Into the details of this development we shall not enter. Suffice it to point out briefly its three most noteworthy stages.

The first—covering, in point of time, the decade from the Paris July Revolution (1830) to the death of king Frederick William III. (1840)—is on the whole a period of waiting and doubt.[263] That a storm is approaching cannot be questioned. There is constant sheet-lightning on the horizon. "Young Germany" issues its first rationalistic manifestoes: Börne's *Letters from Paris*, Heine's essays on German thought, Gutzkow's *Wally, die Zweiflerin* (1835). Political liberalism finds its first lyric champion in Anastasius Grün. Historical bible criticism achieves its first popular triumph in Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1835). In some of the minor German states successful experiments in constitutional government are made; in others there ensue serious conflicts between the adherents of the old order and the new. The air is full of such watchwords as progress, emancipation, humanity, public opinion, spirit of the time. It is apparent that the individualism of the eighteenth century is about to lock arms with the collectivism of the nineteenth in order to march in common with it against the citadel of Holy Alliance feudalism. But, as yet, nothing decisive has been done; indeed, as long as the two ruling states, Austria and Prussia, offer a united front to all attempts at reform, nothing decisive *can* be done.

"Young Germany."

With the death of king Frederick William III. there begins, in Prussia at least, a new era.[264] Frederick William IV., impulsive, imaginative, generous, susceptible to ideal aspirations, seems for a time to justify the hopes placed upon him by the friends of freedom and progress. Soon, however, it becomes apparent that this enthusiastic lover of art, this magnanimous patron of learn-

The "Young Hegelians."

[263] An excellent account of this period, with especial emphasis on the activity of Gutzkow and Laube, in J. Proelss, *D. junge Deutschland p.* 185 ff.

[264] Cf. for this epoch G. Brandes, *D. junge Deutschland p.* 344 ff. K. Biedermann, *Dreissig Jahre deutscher Geschichte* (*1840–1870*). H. v. Treitschke, *D. Gesch. im 19. Jhdt* vol. v.

ing, this devout believer, lacks the one quality indispensable to a monarch: steadfastness of purpose; that he more and more gives way to a fanciful and capricious desire to force modern life back into a picturesque but meaningless mediævalism. And now the liberal movement, both encouraged and threatened, rapidly assumes vaster and vaster proportions, until finally all other questions are merged in one vital, all-absorbing issue: on the one side the monarchy, officialdom, militarism, priestcraft; on the other, the people, popular justice, popular armament, popular religion; on the one coercion, on the other freedom; on the one privilege, on the other law; on the one sectional rivalry and provincialism, on the other national unity and greatness. This is the history of the years from 1840 to 1848. This is the issue which rallies under the same flag of opposition collectivists and individualists, rationalists and pantheists, the moderate and the radical wing of the Hegelians, the adherents of a constitutional monarchy and socialistic republicans. This is the condition of things which brings forth literary productions of such intense party ardour as Herwegh's *Songs of Life* (1841), Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1841), Dingelstedt's *Songs of a Cosmopolitan Night-Watchman* (1842), Prutz's *The Political Childbed* (1845), Freiligrath's *Ça ira* (1846), Gutzkow's *Uriel Acosta* (1846). This is the struggle which leads to that grand outburst of popular wrath and national enthusiasm which at last sweeps away the whole machinery of Metternich despotism, and makes, for a time at least, democracy triumphant: the Revolution of 1848.

The Revolution of 1848.

Public opinion of contemporary Germany, dominated as it is by the colossal events of 1870, is inclined to look upon the Revolution of 1848 as a mere stage show. Dazzled by the extraordinary services rendered to the national cause by the monarchical statesmen and generals of the era of William I., it sees in the popular rising of fifty years ago nothing but a succession of mistakes and failures. But the time will come when 1848

will have taken its place in German history by the side of 1813 and 1870 as one of the supreme moments of the nineteenth century. The time will come when the March Revolution, with all its puerile mistakes and lamentable failures, will have been universally recognised as the great national awakening without which even the successes of imperial Germany would have been impossible. The time will come when the German people will again think with pride and gratitude of the men who in 1848 tried to accomplish what even now has not been fully accomplished: the unification of Germany on a democratic basis. And then it will be seen more clearly than it is seen now that the Revolution of 1848 was a necessary outcome of the great intellectual movement which had begun exactly a hundred years before with Klopstock's *Messias*, and the end of which is still hidden in the future.[265]

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[265] This, in the main, is the place assigned to the Revolution of 1848 by H. v. Sybel in his *Die Gründung des deutschen Reiches*, vol. I.

EPILOGUE.

We shall conclude this review of the leading ideas of German literature with a brief consideration of the moral ideals which underlie the life-work of the greatest poet of our own time, and with a suggestion of the spirit which is at work in the most recent literary movement.

Richard Wagner.

When the revolution of 1848 broke out, Richard Wagner had already completed his first two masterpieces, *Tannhäuser* (1845) and *Lohengrin* (1847). A life of successful artistic activity seemed to lie before him, when he was drawn into the torrent of popular enthusiasm unloosened by the glorious days of March. He went so far as to take an active part in the uprising at Dresden, and a few months later he found himself, together with Kinkel, Ruge, Freiligrath, and many another champion of freedom and right, an outlaw and an exile. It is to Wagner, the banished revolutionist, that German literature owes the most emphatic proclamation of the artistic ideal of the future, the ideal of pantheistic collectivism.

We have seen that this was the direction in which, since the end of the eighteenth century, all German life had been developing. This was the religion of Kant and Fichte, of Goethe and Schiller. This was the fundamental, though disguised, idea of the Romantic movement. This was the goal hovering before Hegel and his followers, before nearly all the men who in the days of the Restoration stood for liberal thought. Richard Wagner, therefore, succeeded to the most precious inheritance of German culture, when in the essays *Art and Revolution* (1849) and *The Art-Work of the Future* (1850), both written during his exile in Switzer-

land, he prophesied the birth of a drama which would embody the aspirations of a whole people, which would be pervaded with the belief in the divineness of all existence.

Like Schiller he turns to Greek art as the eternal symbol of the highest life. But if Schiller finds in Greek art an expression of individual culture brought to its climax, Wagner finds in it a perfect embodiment of collective consciousness. He leads us back to the Athens of the Persian wars, and makes us witness the performance of an Æschylean tragedy.[1]

His view of art as an expression of collective consciousness.

"This people, in every part, in every one of its members abounding in individuality; restlessly active; seeing in the goal of one undertaking only the starting-point of another; in continual friction with itself, in daily changing alliances, daily renewed struggles; to-day successful, to-morrow defeated; to-day threatened by the extreme of danger, to-morrow pressing forward to crush its enemies; absolutely unchecked in its constant and complete development, within and without,—this people would stream together from the public meeting, from court and market-place, from the country, from the ships, from the camp, from most distant parts, would fill to the number of thirty thousand the amphitheatre to listen to the profoundest of all tragedies, Æschylus's *Prometheus*, to compose itself before the mightiest work of art, to grasp the meaning of its own activity, to melt into the most intimate harmony with its own being, with its totality, with its God, and thus to be again in noblest and deepest calm what a few hours ago it had been in the most restless excitement and the most individualized endeavour. For in the tragedy the spectator found the noblest part of his own self blended with the noblest part of the collective being of his nation. Out of his own innermost nature he pronounced to himself, through the mouth of the tragic poet, the Delphian oracle; he, God and priest in one, divine man, himself in the whole, the whole in him; like one of the thousands of fibres which in the one life of the plant grow from the soil, lift themselves in slender forms into the air, to produce the flower which blossoms for eternity."

In glaring contrast with this ideal view of Greek civiliza-

[1] *Die Kunst u. die Revolution; Ges. Schr. u. Dicht.* III, 15 f.

tion Wagner draws a picture of modern society in which we easily recognise the socialistic agitator, a Karl Marx of poetry and art.

Modern Society.

Through priestcraft, princely despotism, and industrialism, the modern world has been ground into a mass of inorganic atoms. If it was the curse of Greek civilization that it rested on a system of slavery which deprived at least a part of the population of their human birthright by making them mere tools for the benefit of the citizen, modern society has extended this slavery, though different in form, over the vast majority of the citizens themselves. The very essence of modern society is a merciless struggle for material existence; the unchecked operation of the commercial principle of supply and demand, and the consequent degradation of human labour to a mere commodity; the crowding together of the masses in a few colossal workshops managed for private benefit; the splitting up of the national body into the toiling many and the enjoying few.[2]

"Who are the people? The people is the community of those who feel a common need. To it belong, therefore, all those who recognise their own need as a common one, who do not expect a relief from their own need except through the relief of the common need, and who, consequently, devote all their energies to this relief of the common need.—Who does not belong to the people? And who are its enemies? All those who feel no need, whose lives are actuated by an imaginary, unreal, egotistical want; by a want which is opposed to the common need, which can be satisfied only at the expense of others going without the necessities of life.

"And this devil, this insane want without a want, this want of want, this want of luxury, rules the world. It is the soul of this industrial system which kills the man in order to employ him as a machine; the soul of this state which robs the citizen of his dignity in order mercifully to accept him as a subject; the soul of this church which sacrifices the world to an extramundane God, the

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[2] For this and the following paragraphs cf. *Kunst u. Revol.* (l. c. 30 ff.) and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (ib. 59 ff. 25).

consummation of all spiritual luxury; it is—alas!—the soul, the very condition of our art."

True art is a priestess of humanity; the art of our age has been degraded to a servant of the flesh. "Its moral aim is money-making, its æsthetic pretext the entertainment of the ennuied." Wearied and exhausted, the modern man hastens to the theatre, not to be uplifted, not to find food for reflection, not to strengthen his feeling of fellowship with all that is sublime and eternal, but in order to distract himself, to get away from the misery of social dissipations, if he is rich, from the monotony of toil and routine if he is poor. Hence this constant appeal to the sensational, this craving for meaningless pomp, this woeful lack of earnestness and character in most of our dramatic productions. Hence this modern monstrosity, Italian opera, with its Vanity Fair of sing-song, spectacular effects, and orchestral flourishes, the embodiment of artistic impotence, the very negation of organic unity.

The socialistic movement.

From this gloomy view of the present—a view in which with all its onesidedness and exaggeration we cannot fail to recognise a kernel of profound truth—Wagner turns all the more hopefully toward the future. Like Fichte, he sees in the climax of social disintegration the beginning of a new social order. The great mass of the people having already ceased to possess private property, the final transformation of all property into public property has become the economic task of the future. Inasmuch as this transformation involves a struggle with private privilege and individual selfishness, its completion still lies in the far distance. But that even now we are in the midst of a revolution tending toward this goal cannot be doubted. As for Wagner, he is in fullest sympathy with it.

"How," thus he asks,[3] "how in the present stage of social development does this revolutionary tendency express itself?

[3] *Kunst u. Revol.; l. c.* 39.

Does it not most strikingly express itself as defiance on the part of the workman, based upon the moral consciousness of his industry as opposed to the vicious idleness or immoral activity of the rich? Does he not, as a revenge, want to make the principle of work the only saving religion of society? Does he not want to force the rich to work like him, to earn like him his daily bread by the sweat of his brow? Must we not fear that the carrying out of this principle would make degrading toil an absolute and universal power and (to limit ourselves to our main subject) would destroy for all time true art? This is indeed the apprehension of many an honest friend of art, even of many a sincere philanthropist who has the preservation of the best in our civilization at heart. But these men fail to see the true essence of the great social movement. They are misled by the expression of violent hatred on the part of the oppressed. Even this hatred proceeds from a deep and noble instinct, the instinct for a dignified enjoyment of life, the desire to press forward from toil to art, from slavery to free humanity."

And the real aim of this great movement is the final and complete emancipation of all, by making each subservient to all; it is the bringing about of a state [4]

"in which men will have freed themselves from the last superstition, the superstition that man can be a tool for an aim lying outside of himself. Having at last recognised himself as the only aim of his existence, having discovered that this aim can be reached only through collective work, man's social creed will consist in a practical affirmation of the doctrine of Jesus: 'Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' And this heavenly father will be none else but the collective wisdom of humanity which appropriates nature and its fulness for the benefit of all."

Society, in other words, is striving for a state where individual morality shall have been absorbed in collective morality; and in this state, Wagner predicts, art will have found its rightful place as the highest moral agency of the world; it will at last be in a position where, unsullied by selfishness and sordid

The art of the future.

[4] *Kunst u. Revol.; l. c.* 40.

gain, it will without reserve abandon itself to its supreme mission of interpreting and sanctifying life. The art-work of the future will be again what the Greek tragedy, what the *Nibelungenlied*, what the mediæval cathedrals were, the product of the collective energy of a whole age. But, since this age will be more enlightened, more spiritual, more comprehensive than any previous age, it will produce also a work of art more enlightened, more spiritual, and more comprehensive than the artistic creations of all former ages.

As the majority of people will probably always be inclined to look at social questions from the commercial point of view, a resolute and fearless proclamation of the eternal values of human life is doubly needed. And if the millennium of unselfishness and collective devotion, if the golden age of poetry and art, prophesied by Wagner, has not come yet; if in the form predicted by him it will probably never come, it still remains an ideal worthy of the best inspiration of the best men.

Nor should the fact that Wagner in later life made a compromise with existing conditions be taken as evidence that the ideals of his early manhood failed him at the height of his power. For never perhaps has an artist felt himself so distinctly and persistently as the representative of a whole nation as he. And who can listen to the enchanting "Waldweben" or the pathetic farewell scene between Wotan and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, to the soul-stirring scene in *Siegfried* where Brünnhilde is awakened by her deliverer's "long, long kiss of youth and love," to Siegfried's majestic funeral dirge in *Die Götterdämmerung*, without feeling that here indeed is expressed the fundamental passion, the innermost struggle, the deepest longing of a man who derives his noblest feelings from a belief in the divineness of all life and his best thoughts from the ideal of a perfect and truly human society![5]

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[5] "Die Zeit dünkte mich nichtig, und das wahre Sein lag mir ausser

Literature after 1850.

Apart from Wagner's music-dramas, German literature during the period from the Revolution of 1848 to the final establishment of German unity has produced little that stands for the highest aims of life. Not that there has been a lack of able writers during this time. One needs only to think of such names as Geibel, Hebbel, Otto Ludwig, Gustav Freytag, Wilhelm Jordan, Schack, Hamerling, Scheffel, Dahn, Spielhagen, Paul Heyse, Storm, Fontane, Raabe, Fritz Reuter, Gottfried Keller, Anzengruber, Rosegger, to bring to one's mind a world of sturdy respectability, of earnest thought, of patriotic devotion, of æsthetic refinement, of hearty joyfulness, of deepest feeling, of invincible humour. But it is nevertheless true that literature in the decades preceding or immediately following the Franco-German war had ceased to be a motive power of highest national importance. The great movement for political unification which had reached its first climax in the national uprising of 1813, the second in the Revolution of 1848, now pressed toward its final crisis. Not the thinker and the poet, but the statesman and the general were now the men most needed. The hour had come for king William and his paladins.

The modern Storm and Stress.

At present we are witnessing another turning of the tide. With German unity accomplished, with German industry and commerce successfully established in the world's market, with German science setting the methods of research to all other nations, the ideals of the inner life are once more beginning to assert themselves, and it is clear that literature is once more to take the lead in the strife for social progress.

In more ways than one, the intellectual situation of to-day resembles the intellectual situation during the seventies and

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ihrer Gesetzmässigkeit"—words from the *Epilogischer Bericht* to *Der Ring des Nibelungen; Ges. Schr. u. Dicht.* VI, 369.—H. T. Finck in his interesting book, *Wagner and His Works*, entirely fails to do justice to Wagner's dreams of social reform.

eighties of the last century. The Storm-and-Stress agitation, which then was at its height, was the composite result of a number of movements, distinct from each other in temper and immediate purpose, but at one in their ultimate aim of widening the scope of individual life, of raising man to the stature of his true self. Richardson and Rousseau, Diderot and Ossian, combined to produce *The Sorrows of Werther* and *The Robbers.* Pietism and Rationalism, sentimentality and self-portrayal, the yearning for nature and the striving for freedom, all rushed together into one surging whirlpool of revolt against the existing social and political order.

To-day, as a hundred and twenty years ago, the leading note of German literature is revolt. In the eighteenth century this revolt meant the ascendency of the middle classes over an hereditary aristocracy which had ceased to be an aristocracy of the spirit; to-day it means the ascendency of the working classes over a bourgeoisie which has ceased to be the representative of the whole people. It means now no less than it meant then an upward movement in the development of the race, another phase in the gradual extension of human dignity and self-respect; it means a further step toward the final reconciliation of individualism and collectivism.

To-day, as a hundred and twenty years ago, the names of the men who first gave life to the new literature are not the names of Germans: the modern Rousseau is Tolstoi, and the modern Diderot is Ibsen. But to-day happens what happened then: the foreign pioneers are quickly being succeeded by German writers of originality and power; and if, perhaps, no Goethe or Schiller has as yet come forth, the nearly simultaneous appearance of such works as Sudermann's *Heimat* (1893) and Hauptmann's *Die Weber* (1892) augurs well indeed for the future of the German drama.[6]

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[6] For a comprehensive account of the recent dramatic development cf. B. Litzmann, *Das deutsche Drama in den litterarischen Bewegungen der Gegenwart.* Also Schönbach's *Über Lesen u. Bildung.* p. 235 ff., and R. M. Meyer's *Deutsche Litteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts.*

The revival of the drama.

At no time, perhaps, during the present century has German dramatic literature, and German literature in general, been at so low an ebb as it was during the decade which followed the Franco-German war. Then it seemed as if military achievements and political glory had crushed the finer emotions of the German heart, as if the gigantic struggles which had led to the establishment of national unity and greatness had so exhausted the productive energy of the German people that there was no strength left for the cultivation of those ideal aspirations which give to life its highest charm. With the exception of Richard Wagner, Germany has produced in the Bismarckian era not a single poet or artist whose name could be mentioned by the side of that of the Iron Chancellor himself. And the very years when Bismarck's power was at its height, when the destiny of Europe was held in the hands of German diplomacy, were marked in literature by the supremacy of flimsiness and insipidity. The one fact that a writer so utterly devoid both of artistic feeling and of ideal aims as Paul Lindau should in those years have been able to impose himself upon a credulous public as a critic of the Lessingian type is sufficient to show to what a depth of literary apathy the land of Schiller and Goethe had then sunk.

This was clearly an unnatural condition. A people that has risen to leadership in nearly all the domains of higher activity, a people which stands among the very foremost nations of the world in politics, in science, in education, in trade, in industry, in social organization, such a people cannot in the long run remain satisfied with a second place in literature and art. The same force which impelled it to a heightened and diversified activity in material things and in matters that concern the intellect, must in the end manifest itself in heightening and diversifying the feeling and the imagination also. For just as in the life of the individual there is an unbroken chain of action and reaction

between the various functions of mind or body, as the exercise of *one* muscle inevitably brings into play a number of other muscles connected with it, as the training of one's memory is impossible without the corresponding simultaneous training of one's will, so it is in the life of a nation: whatever stimulus is given to one organ of national activity, it is never given to this organ alone, it is passed on to other organs, and sooner or later it pervades the whole national body.

This is what is happening now in German literature. German literature is at last beginning to partake in that universal heightening of German national life of which the foundation of the new empire thirty years ago was the first far-shining signal, which has made the German universities a meeting-ground of the best students from all over the globe, and which has helped to build the record-breaking flyers "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" and "Deutschland." German literature is at last beginning to reap the fruits of the seed that was sown on the bloody battlefields of Metz and Sedan: once more is literature coming to be something more than a mere pastime or recreation, once more is it coming to be a matter of national concern; once more are writers coming forward who feel that they have a mission to fulfil, whose highest desire it is to be interpreters of the longings and aspirations of the people; once more are novels and dramas being produced which arouse popular passion and enthusiasm, because they represent, in palpable and living forms, the momentous problems and conflicts of the day.

Contrasts of German life.

Our whole age is an age of unsolved problems and unsettled conflicts. Everywhere, all the world over, there is a violent clash between the old and the new, between the classes and the masses, between capital and labour, between autocracy and freedom, between state and church, between traditional creeds and personal convictions. Nowhere, however, is

this conflict being waged with such an intensity, such a deep-rooted bitterness as in Germany. Germany is at present the classic land of moral contrasts. In nearly every domain of life the country is divided into parties bent on mutual annihilation.

Politically, the strife between church and state, which in the seventies flamed up with such a sinister glare, is at present smouldering under the ashes. But it would be a mistake to think that the passions which at that time seemed to set the whole nation on fire had spent their force. As long as there is on the one hand a centralized empire claiming absolute control over the intellectual and moral training of all its subjects, on the other an infallible papacy claiming superhuman authority and demanding unconditional submission to its divine laws, there can be no real and enduring public peace, there can be at best a temporary cessation of hostilities, and at any moment the perennial dispute between king and pontiff may break out again.

Even less veiled than this war between the powers temporal and spiritual is the second great conflict that threatens the public peace of Germany : the conflict between monarchy and democracy. There can be no doubt that this is the real point at issue between the socialist labour party and the imperial government. On the surface it is a question of labour organization, of the distribution of wealth, of strikes and wages ; at bottom it is a question of life and death between military absolutism and popular autonomy. Well enough do the upholders of the monarchy know that the socialist state of the future is a harmless Utopia, a humanitarian dream which would vanish into air at the first real attempt to put it into practice. This is not what they fear. What they do fear and what they resist with the grim ardour of men attacked in the very stronghold of their innermost convictions is the undermining of military authority, the shattering of the belief in the royalist legend, the spread of republican ideas—the *real* dangers to

the monarchy which the socialist agitation of the last twenty-five years has conjured up. Hence the wholesale prosecution of socialist editors, the endless trials for *lèse-majesté*, the organized efforts to suppress free thought by means of an approved theology, the ever-repeated attempts to curtail the political franchise, measures which of course have no other effect but to strengthen and cement the ranks of the opposition and to inspire them with a determined devotion to a cause which they believe in the end is bound to win.

And the same is true of the attitude of the masses in the third great struggle which has to be fought out in the twentieth century: the struggle between industrialism and humanity. Nowhere are the lines between employer and employed more sharply drawn than in Germany, nowhere is there more of class feeling and of class hatred. But this very fact has given to the German labour movement a compactness and a solidarity superior to that of most other countries; it has imbued it with a firm belief in the final victory of right that has something of a religious fervour; it has made it a movement of an eminently educational character; and I am inclined to think that the socialist workingmen of Germany stand higher than the workingmen of most other countries in intellectual drill, in political discipline, and in respect for the ideal concerns of life.

These are some of the contradictions of public life in contemporary Germany. But there are contradictions also in the individual life of the cultivated German of to-day: above all the contradiction between the materialistic tendencies of our own, predominantly scientific age, and the ideal cravings bequeathed to us by a past excelling in literary and æsthetic refinement. In no single individual has this contrast received a more striking embodiment than in that strangely paradoxical poet-philosopher whose rhapsodic, half-inspired, half-crazy utterances have had such a dazzling, though stimulating, influence on the present genera-

tion of German writers and artists: I mean of course in Friedrich Nietzsche. Here we see on the one hand a most delicate perception of the finest operations of the mind, a penetrating analysis of the most tender instincts and longings of the human soul, a revelling in artistic enjoyment, a glorification of the most sublimated culture—and on the other hand, a savage delight in the underlying selfishness and brutality of all life, a ruthless exaltation of might over right, a fierce contempt for the Christian virtues of meekness and faith, an hysterical apotheosis of the "blond beast" and of cavalier morality. No wonder that Nietzsche himself in this whirlpool of conflicting emotions should have lost his own balance, that the night of insanity should have closed in upon him and extinguished even before his bodily death the lights of that exultant life which he loved so much.

Nietzsche.

I have laid emphasis on the multitude of moral conflicts that beset contemporary Germany, not from any desire to paint gloom, but, on the contrary, because I think that from the very friction of these opposing tendencies there has arisen the new life in art and literature, and especially in dramatic literature, of which I spoke before. Novalis has defined individual genius as a plurality of personalities combined in one. Similarly, one might say that the German people is at present giving signs of dramatic genius, because it contains such a variety of opposing ideals, because in Wildenbruch, in Sudermann, in Hauptmann, in Halbe these opposing ideals clash together and are welded by them into something new, into a work of art.

I doubt whether there exists in any language a poetic production which represents the perennial struggle between the powers temporal and spiritual in as striking and picturesque a manner as the drama which unquestionably marks the climax of Ernst von Wildenbruch's artistic career: *King Henry* (1895). This drama is a poetic reflex, as it were, of Bismarck's parliamentary warfare with the Romish Church,

and throughout its scenes, filled as they are with the clatter of mediæval arms and the popular stir of mediæval town halls, we seem to hear an echo of those haughty and defiant words of the founder of German unity: "Nach Canossa gehen wir nicht!"

Wildenbruch's "Konig Heinrich."

Wildenbruch is above all a playwright. He is fiery, passionate, brilliant, rhetorical. He has constantly the stage in mind. He knows how to make the action swell on irresistibly to a grand climax. He leaps, as it were, from catastrophe to catastrophe, leaving it to the imagination of his hearers to make its way after him through the dark glens and ravines that lead up to these shining mountain peaks. All these qualities, characteristic of Wildenbruch's art, are particularly characteristic of the manner in which he, in this drama, represents the historic struggle between King Henry IV. and Pope Gregory VII. as a tragic conflict between two principles, both exalted, both true, but absolutely incompatible with each other, and therefore bent on mutual destruction. That he should have succeeded in arousing in us at the same time genuinely human sympathies, in making us feel that it is after all the individual heart and the individual brain which make the destinies of nations, this is saying a good deal, but it is not, I think, saying too much.

In a prelude we see Henry as a boy, an impetuous, imperious youth, smarting under the discipline of a fanatically religious mother, burning with the desire to equal the fame of his heroic father, at last thrust into the prison walls of monastic asceticism under the tutorship of Anno, archbishop of Cologne.—At the beginning of the drama itself he appears as King, in the acme of his power. He has subdued the rebellious Saxons; he enters triumphantly his faithful Worms; he is received by the citizens as the protector of civil freedom against princely tyranny and clerical arrogance; all Germany seems to rise in a grand ovation to her beloved leader. Intoxicated by his success, he

resents all the more deeply the paternal admonitions of Pope Gregory about the looseness of his private life which are just then conveyed to him; he insists on being crowned Emperor at once; and, when this request is not complied with, he allows himself to be carried away by his indomitable wrath, he forces his bishops into that insulting letter by which Gregory is declared a usurper, a felon, a blasphemer, to be driven out from the sanctuary of the Church which he pollutes by his presence.

And now we are introduced to the other great character of the drama, to the opposite of this fiery, unmanageable young ruler, to Gregory, the self-possessed and self-abasing priest, the man in whose soul there seems to be no room for any passion except the passion for the cause of the Church, for the triumph of the spirit over the flesh, and who nevertheless harbours in his breast, unknown to himself, the most consuming ambition and the most colossal egotism. We see him sitting *in cathedra* in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. Suppliants and criminals are brought before him. A Flemish count, who has committed murder, and who has in vain fled throughout the length and breadth of Europe in quest of delivery from the anguish of his tormented conscience, beseeches the Pope to put an end to his wretched life; Gregory, instead, holds out to him the hope of salvation through joining a crusade. A Roman noble, who in robber-knight fashion has made an assault upon the Pope, and who by the clergy and the people has been condemned to death for this crime, is pardoned by Gregory—"for he has sinned, not against the Church, the holy one, but against Gregory, a poor, feeble mortal." A lay brother of St. Peter's, who, disguised as priest, has taken money from foreign pilgrims for reading mass to them, and who by the clergy and the people has been sentenced to a fine and exile, is ordered by Gregory to be thrown into the Tiber—"for he has sinned against the Church, he has cheated human souls of their salvation."

These scenes have just passed before our eyes when the messengers of King Henry, bearing the letter of libel and vilification, are admitted. Gregory is the only one who in the tumult that follows its reading remains absolutely calm; he protects the messenger himself against the rage of the Romans; he forgives Henry, the man, for what he has said against Gregory, the man.

"For what he has said against the head of the Holy Church, for that let Henry be cursed! I forbid all Christians to serve thee as a King, I release them from the oath that they have sworn thee. Thou, darkness revolting against light, return to chaos! Thou, wave revolting against the ocean, return to naught! No bell shall be sounded in the city where Henry dwells, no church be opened, no sacrament be administered. Where Henry dwells, death shall dwell! Let my legates go forth and announce my message to the world!"

The climax of the whole drama is, as it should be, the Canossa catastrophe. It is here that Gregory, the victor in the political game, succumbs morally; that Henry, the vanquished, rises in his native greatness. It is here that Gregory, with all his soaring idealism, reveals himself as an inhuman monster; that Henry, with all his faults and frailties, arouses to the full the sympathy which we cannot help feeling for a bravely struggling man.

The excommunication of Henry has plunged Germany into civil war. A rival king, Rudolf of Swabia, has been proclaimed. He and the chiefs of his party have come to Canossa to obtain the papal sanction for their revolt. Gregory clearly sees that Rudolf is nothing but a figurehead, a mere tool in the hands of fanatic conspirators, totally unfit to rule an empire. He clearly feels it his duty to discountenance this revolt, to restore peace to Germany by making his peace with Henry. But the demon of ambition lurking in his breast beguiles him with a vision of world-dominion: he, the servant of the servants of God, shall be the arbiter of Europe; he, the plebeian, shall see the crowns of kings roll before him in the dust. He does

not discountenance Rudolf and his set; and when Henry appears before the castle, broken and humiliated, asking for absolution from the ban, Gregory remains unmoved. For three days and nights the King stands before the gate in ice and snow; for three days and nights the Pope sits in his chair, speechless, sleepless, refusing to eat or drink. At last, the intercession of Henry's mother, who, herself in the shadow of death, has come to pray for her son's salvation, softens Gregory's heart: he admits Henry to his presence. Henry appears, a king even in his misery. He bends his knee before the Pope, he confesses his guilt, he acknowledges the justice of his punishment. The reconciliation is brought about. Just then Henry's glance falls upon Rudolf and his followers standing in the background. He greets them as friends, thinking that they have come to renew their allegiance to him. But they rudely repulse him, and boast of the Pope's intention to acknowledge Rudolf as King. And Gregory does *not* contradict them. With fearful suddenness Henry sees what a shameful game has been played with him; and yet he masters himself, he makes one last appeal to whatever there is of true feeling in his opponent:

"God, help me against myself! Christ, Saviour, who wast thyself a king among the heavenly host and didst bow thy neck under the scourge, help me against myself! (*He turns abruptly toward Gregory.*) Once before I knelt before thee—I did it for myself. (*He falls down on his knees.*) Here, a second time, I lie before thee, for Germany lie I here! Break thy silence! Thy silence is the coffin in which the happiness of Germany is entombed! If thou didst know how unhappy this Germany is, thou wouldst speak;—speak! Thou, ordained by God to bring peace to the world, let me take peace with me on my way to Germany, not war, not howling civil war!"

And Gregory remains silent! From here on to the end of the drama there is nothing but revenge, and revenge on revenge. And this work of destruction does not stop until both Gregory and Henry have breathed their last. Both men die in defeat and desolation; both die inwardly un-

broken—Gregory trusting in the future triumph of the Church, Henry trusting in the indestructible vitality of the German people.

One could not well conceive of a more striking artistic contrast than that which exists between this sonorous, brilliant, and (one must confess it) somewhat melodramatic tragedy of Wildenbruch's and a number of dramas by Sudermann, Hauptmann, and Halbe which directly or indirectly deal with those other conflicts of modern German life of which I have spoken before: the struggle between monarchy and democracy, between society and the individual, between the Church and free thought, between industrialism and humanity, between materialism and idealism. Wildenbruch stands alone among contemporary German dramatists as a stanch advocate of the ideals of the past. His is essentially a world of chivalry. He is preeminently a believer, a believer in the reality of revealed truths, in the sacredness of existing conditions, in the beauty and nobility of monarchical institutions, in the exalted mission of the Hohenzollern dynasty, and in his own mission to proclaim it. His ideal is the blond German youth, firm and faithful, pure and pious, ready to lay down his life in the service of his King—the noble youth whom we know from the Watch on the Rhine and from Emperor William's speeches. It is hard to resist the unsophisticated ardour of his aristocratic convictions, the naïve optimism of his warlike patriotism. Yet one cannot help feeling that he has been too lightly touched by the wave of modern doubt and social discontent.

Just here is the source from which his three foremost competitors—Sudermann, Hauptmann, and Halbe—derive their inspiration and strength. They are doubters and seekers; they are steeped in Nietzsche and Ibsen; they sympathize with the revolt of the masses against aristocratic and plutocratic class rule, with the rebellion of the individual against the soulless conventions of society and the

obsolete formulas of the church; they incline to pessimism and sarcasm; it is in *their* writings that we hear the minor key and the deeper discords of modern life.

Of the three, Halbe seems to me the one who gives least promise of real greatness. He is an excellent observer, he sees clearly the symptoms of social unrest that surround us, he feels distinctly the conflict which is going on in every one of us between the traditions of the past and the ideals of the future; but he lacks the strength of character and the depth of conviction which would enable him to take a definite stand in this conflict. He vacillates between extreme individualism and moral dissoluteness on the one hand and sentimental cravings for the peace and security of traditional morality on the other. He never gets beyond impulses, he never opens up a new world to us, he never leads us into the regions of moral freedom.

There is no better illustration of this than his most ambitious production—*Mother Earth* (1895), a drama which has the undoubted merit of dealing with a distinctly modern situation, the clash between the hereditary, patriarchal, instinctive views of life, resting on the belief in the accepted order of things, and the new democratic ideas, born of the restlessness of industrial progress and competition.

Halbe's "Mutter Erde."

Paul Warkentin, the son of an East-Elbian country gentleman (all these modernest Germans are East-Elbians), became acquainted, while studying at Berlin, with a young woman of superior intellect and will power, Hella Bernhardy by name. The daughter of a University professor, she had from childhood on led a city life, and being of an almost masculine bent of mind, had early become absorbed in the problems of the day, particularly in the woman movement. To Paul, the dreamy, undeveloped country boy, she opened a new world of ideas; and the natural consequence was their engagement and subsequent marriage. The latter, however, was not accomplished without a violent catastrophe. For Paul's

father, who naturally wished his son to be his successor in the management of the estate, insisted on his marrying one of the girls of the neighbourhood, Antoinette, a playmate of Paul's in his country-school days, to whom he had been as much as engaged when he left for the University. And when Paul refused both to marry Antoinette and to assume the management of the estate, the irascible old gentleman forbade him his house.

All this has happened some ten years ago. Since then Paul and his wife have plunged into the exciting life of Berlin journalism, they have been editing a paper bearing the suggestive name of 'Women's Rights,' and, if we may trust Hella's own statements, have played a considerable part in radical politics. Now the father has suddenly died; and for the first time since his marriage, Paul re-enters the house of his ancestors, to pay the last homage to the departed one. Hella accompanies him, although she hates to leave the city and begrudges the delay which this trip will cause in the printing of her next editorial in 'Women's Rights.' However, to recompense herself for this intellectual sacrifice, she has brought with her a young admirer of hers, who will help her reading proof while Paul is busy with the funeral arrangements or receives visits of condolence! Paul, on the other hand, with the first step over the threshold of his old home feels himself drawn back into the spell of the long-neglected but ever-precious recollections of his youth. And so it is not surprising that husband and wife do not harmonize as well in these new, quiet surroundings as they seemed to do in the bustling stir of the capital. In fact, they are at odds in small things as well as great. Paul is deeply touched at the sight of the parlour chandelier lit in his honour by the old maiden aunt, his foster mother;—Hella thinks such sentimentality ridiculous. Paul comes in, covered with snow and glowing with delight over a ride he has taken on horseback through the wintry landscape, the first one for ten years: "You don't know what it is to be a man

until you feel a horse under you!" Hella wishes herself to be back at her desk in the editor's office. And when Hella reminds her husband of the days when they were still battling shoulder to shoulder in the good fight for the betterment of the race, he breaks out: "Fight for the betterment of the race? You had better speak of the dissipation of my energies, the benumbing of my natural instincts, the bankruptcy of my moral life—that is what has been the result of this artificial existence of ours, this continual restlessness, this bookishness, these airy abstractions, this casting loose from the soil where our true strength is rooted."

It is after one of these scenes (needless to say!) that Antoinette, the love of Paul's boyhood, appears. After having been jilted by Paul, the impetuous girl out of sheer despair had thrown herself away on the first man that asked for her hand, a worthless, rollicking, dissipated Junker of the neighbourhood; and since then she has been leading a wretched and ignominious life, hating herself, her husband, the world. Now she sees Paul again, and his face at once reveals to her his history. "One consolation is left me," she tells him: "you have made me unhappy; but you are unhappy too! And to enjoy that I am here!" Paul, on his part, is transfixed. All his ideals of an active and useful life, all the traditions of his home with its friendly human intercourse, its naturalness, its honesty and soundness, seem to him to have taken form in this daughter of his own native soil, this superb, beautiful woman, all the more beautiful to him for her grief. For she is grieving for him! She might have been his! And he has thrown her away, to attach himself to a mere shadow, to a sexless being in whose veins there flows no blood and whose brain is thinking thoughts that have no meaning for him!

Up to this point the action of the play is perfectly consistent, in a way even fascinating. For Halbe is a master of those little illuminating touches which bring out with life-

like energy the great contrast that pervades the whole drama. But now we have arrived at the crucial point of the plot. What is Paul to do? Is he to leave Hella and return to his first love? Or is he to remain faithful to his marital vow and suppress his instinctive longings? Either solution, it seems to me, would have been artistically possible, and to a degree even satisfactory. For Hella appears from the very first so entirely devoid not only of womanly grace, but of womanly feeling also, so utterly incapable of even understanding her wifely duties, that one would greet Paul's deserting her for Antoinette almost with joy, savage though this joy might be. It would be a return to Nature, to undefiled, sensuous, exuberant Nature; it would be violence, but it would be violence that overturns a false, a vicious order of things, that sets things into their right relations. On the other hand, if Paul and Antoinette were to renounce each other, this too would be in a way a satisfactory ending. It would be a moral victory, a victory of duty over instinct. Both Paul and Antoinette would return to their daily tasks, enriched and strengthened by the rapturous feelings which the assurance of their spiritual inseparableness has brought them. And both would find ample opportunity for making humanity reap the fruits of their bitter experience—Paul by devoting himself with a higher heart and a nobler purpose to the cause for which he has been working these last ten years; Antoinette by giving herself to that most womanly of occupations, the healing of wounds and the relieving of distress.

Halbe has chosen to follow neither of these two lines of thought. Instead, he makes the two lovers go hand in hand into death, "return to Mother Earth" as they say themselves. This seems to me, even apart from the melodramatic manner in which it is brought about, an utterly indefensible ending of the play. For it is in vain that Halbe tries to justify it by Hella's unwillingness to relieve her husband from his vows. Its true reason (not justifica-

tion) lies in the fact that Halbe is given over to a hopeless fatalism which makes him shrink from any kind of free moral decision. To him life seems to be nothing but a series of impressions; nowhere is there a suggestion in him of a manly grappling with outward circumstance; nowhere does he rise above conditions; and even where he preaches revolt against established evils, as in his *Icedriftings* (1892) and *Youth* (1893), this very revolt is nothing but disguised self-indulgence and self-gratification.

It is just here that the vast superiority of Sudermann and Hauptmann over Halbe shows itself; it is the deep moral earnestness, the holy zeal for truth, the passionate longing for purity of thought and life, the intense sympathy with human joys and sufferings which give even to their darkest and seemingly hopeless pictures of social distress and rottenness a glow of that enthusiasm which makes us see a new heaven and a new earth.

Hauptmann.

What could be gloomier or more abject than the awful scenes of popular misery and degradation that are rolled up before us in Hauptmann's *The Weavers* (1892)? Yet never has there been produced a work of art which appealed more strongly to our highest moral instincts. Never has poetry lifted her voice more solemnly for justice and right; never has she appeared more truly as a messenger from above, as an angel of divine wrath, as a prophetess of eternal judgments. What could be more oppressive and excruciating than the mental agonies portrayed in the same author's *Lonely People* (1891)—agonies of souls blindly struggling for freedom and light, craving for a life in the spirit, for completeness of existence, revelling in the thought of a new, all-embracing religion, but totally unable to cope with existing conditions, and therefore ground down under the wheels of inexorable reality? Yet I doubt whether there are many works of literature that preach more forcibly the necessity of self-discipline, that impress us more deeply with the beauty of

simple right-mindedness, or that glorify more truthfully a brave aggressive idealism.

Sudermann.

Sudermann's artistic temper is diametrically opposed to that of Hauptmann. Hauptmann is lyrical, Sudermann is rhetorical; Hauptmann is the greater poet, Sudermann is the greater dramatist; Hauptmann is a strange combination of sublime visions and cruel disenchantments, of fantastic mysticism and impressionist realism, of pantheistic ideals and a hidden longing for the lost belief of childhood; Sudermann is absolutely straightforward, there are no mysterious recesses in him, he is a single-minded champion of intellectual freedom and unhampered individuality. Yet, in spite of these differences in the artistic temper of the two men, the moral effect of Sudermann's dramas is very similar to that of Hauptmann's. Take such a play as *Sodom's Ruin* (1891), with its lurid descriptions of baseness, dissoluteness, and debauchery. The effect of this drama is not debasing or enervating, as is the case with most of Zola's productions of a similar character. On the contrary, it is stimulating and stirring in the highest degree. It affects us as a formidable arraignment of social conditions which it is for us to set right; like Schiller's youthful dramas it fills us with moral indignation; it inspires us with a solemn determination to put our hand to the plough which is to rake up the barren field of humanity and open it to the wholesome influx of light and air. Or take the most widely known of Sudermann's earlier works, *Heimat* (1893), or as it is called in England and America: *Magda*. What gives to this drama its distinguishing feature and its abiding value, is that here we have not merely a domestic tragedy of the order of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, not merely a breaking loose from family ties that have become intolerable, not merely a revolt against a paternal authority which stifles individual life, but, beside and above all this, an ever-present sense of

the sacredness of personal obligations and a recognition of the supreme duty of faithfulness to one's higher self.

Indeed, it is not surprising that these two men, Hauptmann and Sudermann, should have come to be acknowledged as the real leaders in the new literary movement of Germany. From the very first they have given a voice to the hopes, longings, and perplexities bound up with the essentially modern problems of modern life; and nearly every new work of theirs has marked a step forward, has brought them nearer to that comprehensiveness of view from which the conflicts of existence appear not any more as irreconcilable and permanent, but as fleeting discords dissolving into the strains of the world's universal symphony, thereby increasing its volume and heightening its beauty. It is a matter for genuine rejoicing that the end of the nineteenth century should have brought us at least one work from each of these men in which this note of the universally human is heard with such a distinctness as to bring back to our minds the classic era of eighteenth-century culture: I mean Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* (1896) and Sudermann's *John the Baptist* (1898). With a brief consideration of these two dramas this epilogue may be brought to a close.

"Die versunkene Glocke."

The Sunken Bell is a fairy drama, a fantastic vision, transporting us into lonely forests haunted by elfs and water-sprites, and strangely illumined by the flicker of swarming glow-worms. But in these weird surroundings and among these fanciful happenings we soon are brought face to face with scenes that reveal the most fundamental passions and longings of the human heart.

The time of the action is somewhere in the Middle Ages. The principal character is a figure belonging to the race of Faust, Manfred, and Brand: Meister Heinrich, a bell-founder in a lonely village of the Riesengebirge. It is evidently not long since Christianity made its way into

these remote regions, for we hear that the mountain elfs are disgusted with the unaccustomed sight of church-building going on in the midst of their retreats, and still more with the unaccustomed sound of the church bells ringing through the peace of the forests. Just now one of these malicious spirits has seized the opportunity of venting his spite. He has lain in wait when a bell wrought by Master Henry and destined for a chapel on the mountain summit was being carted up the hill; he has broken the wheel of the truck, and has hurled the bell and its maker down into the lake. Here is the beginning of the action. Henry, rallying, but as yet hardly conscious of his steps, gropes his way upward again, and wanders about in aimless despair through the rocky wilderness. Finally he sinks down exhausted. His cries of agony have been overheard by Rautendelein, a strange mixture of elf and maiden; and for the first time there has been awakened in her breast the dim feeling of a higher life and the blind desire to win it. So, when the villagers come to carry Henry's nearly lifeless body back to the valley, Rautendelein follows them, determined to see and to know "the land of men." Disguised as a servant, she enters the house where Henry, attended by his faithful wife, lies at the point of death. He is delirious. His life seems to him a failure; the comforting words of his wife sound to him like mockery; he persuades himself that she has no conception of what it is to feel the creative impulse and to have it checked by brutal fate; he is sure that she does not understand him, that nobody understands him; he curses his work; he wishes to die. At this moment Rautendelein appears, and the sight of this unbroken youthful life brings back to him his own youthful aspirations. It is as though Nature herself had touched him and renewed his strength, as though she beckoned him to throw away the commonplace cares and duties of ordinary social existence and to follow him to the heights of a free, unfettered, creative activity. He cannot resist. The

supreme desire for unhampered exercise of his faculties restores his health; the delirious despondency leaves him; he is himself again.

When the scene changes, Rautendelein has led him back into the mountains. She now appears as his inspiring genius. He is in the fulness of his powers; he is raised above the petty conflict of good and evil. He has won control over the spirits that dwell in rock and cavern; with their help he is creating a wonder-work of art, a temple structure on highest mountain peak whose melodious chime is to call free humanity to the festival of universal brotherhood. Wrapt up in these ecstatic visions he has entirely lost sight of his former life. He seems not to know that once he had a loving wife and children. He scorns the friendly warnings of the village priest, who ventures into his enchanted wilderness in order to save his soul. He defies the onslaught of the peasants who attempt to storm his fastness in order to annihilate the godless blasphemer. He quiets occasional pangs of conscience by renewed feverish work; only at night he lies restless and is visited by fearful dreams. More and more, however, these evil forebodings get the better of him. Again and again he hears a strange sound that seems to draw him downward, he recognises in it the tolling of the bell that lies at the bottom of the mountain lake. What causes the bell to give the sound? Who is that pale, ghastly figure floating toward it and striking its tongue? And who are these shadowy forms of little children, coming slowly and sadly toward him, and carrying with great effort a heavily filled urn? Breathless with horror, he addresses them. "What carry ye?" "Father, we carry an urn." "What is in the urn?" "Father, something bitter." "What is the something bitter?" "Father, our mother's tears." "Where is your mother?" "Where the water-lilies grow."

Now, at last, Henry sees that he has overstepped the bounds set to man. The whole wretchedness of his imag-

ined grandeur is revealed to him with terrible clearness. He drives Rautendelein away with calumny and cursing. He destroys with his own hand the work which had been to him the symbol of a perfect humanity. He resolves to descend again to the fellowship of mortals. But it is too late. The superhuman striving has consumed his strength. In his last moment Rautendelein appears to him once more; she has returned into her own realm, she has become the wife of an ugly old water-sprite who had wooed her for years. But she is still longing for human affections, and she presses a fervent kiss upon the lips of the dying one.

If in this fairy-drama of Hauptmann's, in spite of its fantastic setting, we are yet made to hear, throughout, the echo of the spiritual struggles of modern humanity, we are introduced into equally modern conflicts in Sudermann's biblical drama *Johannes.*

"Johannes."

Sudermann's John the Baptist is indeed a counterpart to Hauptmann's Henry, the bell-founder. The fate of both is genuinely tragic. The mediæval mystic succumbs in striving for an artistic ideal too grand and too shadowy for human imagination. The Jewish prophet succumbs in striving for a moral ideal too visionary and too austere for human happiness. Both lose faith in themselves and in their mission, and both rise through their very failure to the height of true humanity. Nothing is more impressive in Sudermann's drama than the way in which this disenchantment of the prophet with himself, this gradual awakening to the sense of his fundamental error, and the final bursting forth of the true light from doubt and despair, are brought before us.

In the beginning we see the preacher in the wilderness. He has gathered about himself the laden and the lowly. With burning words he speaks to them of the woe of the time, of the misery of the people trodden into the dust both by the foreign conqueror and by its own rulers, tormented by its traditional obedience to a heartless, inexorable law. And

he holds out to them the vision of the deliverer and avenger that is to come: the Messiah, clad in splendour, like the King of the heavenly host, the cherubim around him on armoured steeds and with flaming swords, ready to crush and to slaughter. Yet, irresistible and intoxicating as his harangues are, an occasional look, an occasional word betrays even here that his faith is not born of a free and joyous surrender to the divine, but of a dark, brooding fanaticism, and we feel instinctively that it will not stand the test of self-scrutiny.

Next he appears in the streets of Jerusalem, inciting the populace to revolt against Herod and his lustful house, especially against the scandalous marriage into which the tetrarch has just entered with Herodias, the divorced wife of his own brother, and which he wishes to have sanctioned by the synagogue. But here again, it is the blind fanatic rather than the inspired leader whom we hear in John's language. Having led the infuriated mob to the King's palace, he is at a loss what to do, he feels lonely in the midst of the surging crowd, he longs for his rocks in the wilderness; and when the Pharisees take this opportunity to embarrass him by mocking questions about the new Law the advent of which he has been holding out to his hearers, he has no answer. Just then there is heard out of the midst of the populace the voice of a Galilean pilgrim: "Higher than Law and Sacrifice is Love!" It is the message of him whose coming John has been preaching without divining his true call. This word strikes deep into his soul. For the first time he doubts his own mission, for the first time there looms up before him the dim vision of something more exalted than his own dream of the Messiah.

Again he rises to his full power as a hero of asceticism in his interview with Herodias and her wanton daughter Salome. Salome has been fascinated by the weird, fantastic appearance of this man with the lion's mane and the far-away look in his eyes; she wishes to flirt with him, to

tame him, to possess him. When he enters the palace, she receives him with a shower of roses and the voluptuous songs of her maidens. But he remains unmoved. "Gird thy loins," he says to her, "and turn away from me in sackcloth and ashes. For I have been sent as a wrath over thee and as a curse to destroy thee." And he does not seem to notice that this very curse affects the infatuated girl like a magic love-potion. Herodias, too, wishes to win him—she wishes to make him a tool of her political designs, to stifle through him the popular opposition to the clerical sanction of her marriage; and she attempts to bribe him by offering him the charms of her daughter. But again his only answer is: "Adulteress!" And yet even this victory over sensual temptation leaves a sting in his soul; for again he hears that mysterious word, Love, and he must remain silent when Herodias calls out to him: "What right have you to judge the guilty, you who flee from human life into the loneliness of the desert? What do you know of those who live and die for love's sake?"

And now he comes to see that he does not understand even those nearest to him. The wife of his favourite disciple comes to him and beseeches him to give back to her the heart of her husband; for since he has joined the band of the Baptist's followers he has forsaken his home and forgotten his kindred. And John never knew anything of this man's inner life, he knew nothing of the love that he is accused of having stifled! Who, then, is he to teach others—he who is constantly confronted with his own limitations, who must confess to himself that he is without a guiding principle of his own conduct! Where is there an outlook for him? Where is the path toward his salvation? Is it this Love that is thrust upon him from all sides? No, no; it cannot be. Love is littleness, is weakness, is selfishness, is sin! No, the only salvation lies in the Messiah, in him who is to come in heavenly splendour, surrounded by the rainbow, the King of kings, the great fulfiller and

judge! Thus he tries to assure himself, thus he strains every nerve to maintain his tottering belief in his mission, to keep awake the hope of his poor downtrodden people. And from this very people, from the mouth of an old wretched beggar-woman, he now hears for the first time the full, the cruel truth: "We do not want your Messiah! We do not want your King! Kings come only to kings; they have nothing in common with us, the poor. Go away; let us alone, you false prophet!"

Immediately after this scene the climax is reached. Ever since the Baptist for the first time heard that mysterious message of love, he has been endeavouring to discover whence it came. In a vague manner he has associated it with the noble youth whom years ago he baptized in the Jordan, and from whom he has in some way hoped for the fulfilment of his Messianic dreams. Now he learns from some Galilean fishermen that this Jesus of Nazareth has indeed brought a new gospel—not the gospel of a superhuman Messiah, but of human brotherhood and kindliness, of the love of one's enemies, the very gospel of which John, through the bitter disenchantment, has gradually become the worthiest prophet. Just after this meeting with the Galileans he is drawn into the surging throng of the populace, who have streamed together to make a forcible attack upon Herod and his wife as they, in solemn procession, repair to the temple. Torn with conflicting feelings as he is, unable to collect his thoughts, he is pushed along to the steps of the temple. A stone is forced into his hand: he is to execute the judgment of the people against the vicious King himself. Mechanically he lifts the stone; he calls out to Herod: "In the name of him who—"; but the stone glides from his hand, and he stammers—"of him who bade me love you!"

The rest of the drama brings little new of inner experience. Once more John rises to the full grandeur of the Old Testament prophet. Imprisoned, and led before the

love-infatuated Salome, he once more defies her raging passion. He dies with words of peace and hope upon his lips. Immediately after his execution there is heard from the street the hosannah of the jubilant masses greeting the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Conclusion.

It is not the office of Poetry to solve social problems. It *is* the office of Poetry to hold out social ideals. The German drama of the last decade has fulfilled this mission with singular nobility of purpose and with singular artistic success.[7] To think that this remarkable literary phenomenon was a symptom of approaching social peace would of course be tantamount to a belief in the approaching millennium. The end of social strife would end national life itself. But well may we hope that the ideals held out in the German drama of the last decade will help to raise this strife to a higher level and make it, instead of an instrument of destruction, an instrument of progress and human happiness.

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[7] That even in such fearful pictures of moral disintegration as Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang* or *Das Friedensfest* there is a great deal of moral incentive, no one would deny. One cannot help wishing, however, that the *Versunkene Glocke* might have put an end to these awful representations of hopeless misery. Unfortunately in his latest productions, *Fuhrmann Henschel* and *Michael Kramer*, Hauptmann seems to have returned to the earliest stage of his artistic development.

INDEX.

